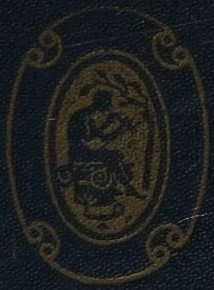

OUT OF PRINT

IMPRESSIONS AND COMMENTS

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THIRD (AND FINAL) SERIES

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BY

HAVELOCK ELLIS

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April 2, 1920. — For ten years or so I have been inclined to avoid Paris, and when I could not avoid it, to spend there but a few hours, making it merely my jumping-board for larger leaps into less familiar regions. It somehow seemed no longer to concern me, and no longer even to interest me. Now, although, with all the world, I am feeling more alien from the prevailing national mood of France than I have ever felt since I began to know France at all, I linger here day after day, wishful to linger still.

Never has Paris seemed so beautiful to me, never have I felt more appreciatively near to its people. Every step I take along its streets, above all in this Latin Quarter I have trodden for over thirty years, I marvel at its familiarity; every yard of it seems known to me, every landmark I recognise, every shop that has changed its character I miss. I realise how richly memory is stored with old pictures, neglected, it may be, but still ready to come to the surface at the challenge of their living counterparts that correspond, or that now cease to correspond.

I realise, too, as I gaze at the lofty antique houses that still stand as of old in Paris, or as I walk in ecstasy at evening by the river, how it is that, whatever indifference to the world one may helplessly acquire or carefully cultivate with the growth of years, there comes no indifference to beauty, and the older I grow the more sensitive I become to the loveliness of things, the more entranced in their contemplation.

And with that comes also, as often before, the realisation that this enhanced sensitiveness is of itself nothing. It is simply part of the deeper and more enriched experiences of life with which one is ever more laden as the years go by. For the joy of Paris, and the beauty of it, I find now, since I last came here, are heightened by the gravity of old memories that make Paris a sacred place to me, peopled with visions that will never turn to life, echoing with the rhythm of little eager feet that will tread it no more.

April 10. — I spent an afternoon before leaving Paris at the old Hôtel de Biron where the almost complete work of Rodin is now admirably displayed. What here interested me most was the final development of his art in the last sculptures of his old age, because this was new to me; he had not reached that stage when I saw him at work in

the little studio in a remote district of Paris, where at that time he sought seclusion, far from the showplace in the Rue de l'Université. These things have a distinct character of their own as a group. They are effaced, the details are smoothed out, as it were washed away by the action of running water, so that only the largest and simplest harmonies of line and form remain. The effect is well seen in "Ariane" and the bust of Lady Warwick. It is really the same liquid quality — *morbidezza* they call it — which is now recognised as a trait of the Alexandrian School of Old Greek sculpture, and it gives so subtle a charm to that work; but Rodin has pushed it to an extreme which the Greeks would have thought inconceivable.

With this final development the large sweep of Rodin's art was completed. There was no further development possible. He began as a minute realist and in that early stage his work even caused offence because it was said to be merely photographic. Then, during the greater and most active part of his career, he developed his characteristic style of deliberate exaggeration, the heightening of natural proportions for the ends of art, the play of light and shade. Finally that stage, too, passed away, and this last period arrived of large simple masses, softened and

alleviated of all semblance to reality, gliding into a vast dim dream.

Have not all the supreme artists tended to follow a like course? Not the lesser artists, the artists of talent, for they seem with the progress of years to be seeking ever further to emphasise the vision of the world which they set out to present. But look at Michelangelo, whose development among great sculptors we can best follow. In that little chapel in Florence devoted to the last stage of his art, one of the shrines of the creative human spirit, we seem to see the marble itself bursting into a life so significant because not completely disentangled out of the obscure depths of Nature from which it draws that life.

But it is not only among artists in this medium that we find the same course of development. It is still clearer to see among painters. I think of the marvellous picture of Titian's old age at Munich in which the splendours of that master's earlier works are forgotten in the attainment of a subdued and clouded glory which rises to still greater heights. I think of Rembrandt, whose art reached its climax as it passed away in the golden haze which, to memory, seems to fill the Hermitage. I think of the fascinating pictures of Hals's old age at Haarlem which, in place of the

superb bravura of his earlier years, have almost the semblance of awkward crudity, and yet, as I recall them, live with so vivid a power that I forget the work of his youth. I think of Turner, whose early genius of the earth, sober and sombre, leapt up to heaven at last in mist and flame: of Carrière, — if he may be included in this noble company, — who began so precisely and ended with those vast figures that seem to come to us out of the world of dreams.

Nor is it in painting only. It is so also in poetry. Look at the last plays of Shakespeare, so loose and undramatic, so flowing or so broken, so full of exquisite music of the spirit more than of poetic form, of a heavenly atmosphere refined beyond any that was ever breathed on earth and yet so humanly tender; or at Shelley, who completed a large cycle of art in a short time, and wrote at last, in the "Witch of Atlas," only with water and fire; or, within a yet greater and yet shorter cycle, trace the evolution of the ideals of Keats.

The critics have always stumbled a little over this final phase of supreme genius. They used to think that Michelangelo's last work was unfinished. They still often think that what we must recognise in such a manifestation is lassitude, failure of energy, a weakening grasp of

brain or hand. I am not sure that there is not an element of truth in such criticism. Only let us not forget that it is the mark of high genius, less to display athletically Titanic strength than to be able to use weakness to reach divine ends. That power, it may well seem to us, is supremely visible in the typical last phase of the highest genius. The artist has lost his early power of realistic grip, and with it lost also his early taste for such power. But he has lost it only to attain a wider and deeper and more symbolic mastery of the world. He no longer cares for the mere literal imagery of a scene he will leave so soon. But he cares more than he has ever before cared for its essence, and he is conscious of that essence with a delicacy of sensitive perception he never before possessed. He is no longer concerned with things; they are receding from his view. As he rises above the earth, like Elijah in his chariot of fire, he now sees it only in the distance. Henceforth he no longer deals with things. It is the soul of things that he brings before us. That is why his later work fascinates us endlessly as, slowly, after many years, enlightened by the long course of our own experience, we begin at last to understand what it means.

April 20. — Last night I went to the Bach

Choir Festival, a crowded but silent gathering of devoted musicians, and possibly I was the least musical person there. It was in the Westminster Central Hall, and so I was able to ascertain that this Hall is as ugly and depressing inside as it is outside; so also the man next to me thought, and he expounded the theory that modern buildings should always be constructed underground, to minimise their ugliness. I found myself frequently closing my eyes in order to shut out this incongruous background to the music of Bach.

The programme was mainly choral, and as I listened there was still echoing in my memory the sound of those wonderful voices in the Russian Church at Athens, those Russian voices which, in their modulated precision, in their delicacy and their depth, make one feel that the human voice, even in a choir, may become really an instrument. The Bach Choir sounds rough and crude beside the recollection of any good Russian choir. So all the greater is the triumph of Bach in dominating so imperfect a medium. Indeed, the chief moments of the performance, at all events those which seemed chiefly to concern me, were when the voices became the sole instrument: the three motets. It is not quite clear to me what a motet is. It appears to mean in the orig-

inal Latin a mutter or grunt; then, in the course of ages, it became a merry ditty, of too gay a character to be counted sacred, and was explicitly banned by the Church; finally it developed strangely into a method of expressing an exalted joy.

Again, as so often before, I found myself comparing Bach and Beethoven, both at times so superb in the accomplishment of their gigantic tasks, Beethoven hammering at his theme as though he were an early worker of the Bronze Age, moulding it deliberately, at times with such care and such technically skilled fingers that every inch of the surface is beautiful; and Bach, who seems to create music as the Hebrew God created the world on the first day, performing stupendous tasks with the ease of so perfect a joy that for him no seventh day of rest seems needed. Beethoven, however much I may rebel against him, pierces more poignantly, more exquisitely, to the tenderest spots of the soul, but always disturbingly, for the joy that he discerns is a remotely achieved joy to which he will never attain. His tapestry may be woven in heaven, but we feel that he has spun the thread of it in hell. Bach lives always in the childish gaiety of heaven, and so he fills us with a serene and profound satisfaction that remains unalloyed. The

mark of his music is exhilaration, an exhilaration that penetrates to the farthest recesses of one's being. When I came out of the Central Hall, I felt as though I were dancing along the pavements of Westminster, and it seemed that but a little more and I should leap as I walked, just as I was wont to do when I was a child.

May 14. — "How is Religion still possible?" This question is posed by so able a thinker as Dr. Merz as the question of paramount importance, and he can only find a paradoxical answer.

It is a question which still seems to be taken seriously by many otherwise intelligent persons who are thereby stranded in the end on all sorts of hidden sandbanks. They do not ask: How is Walking still possible? They do not ask: How is Hunger still possible? Yet it is really the same kind of question.

It is always marvellous to find how people worry themselves over unnecessary problems and spin the most fantastic webs of abstruse speculation around even the simplest things. Religion, if it is anything at all, must be a natural organic function, like walking, like eating, better still, one may say, like loving. For the closest analogy, and indeed real relationship, of religion, is with the function of reproduction and the emo-

tions of sex. The functions of walking and eating are more or less necessary to life in their rhythmic recurrence, and it is legitimate in their absence to endeavour to stimulate them into action. But the function of religion, like that of love, is not necessary to life, nor may it with any certainty be stimulated into activity. Need it? These functions are either working within you or they are not. If not, then it is clear that your organism is in no need of them at the present moment, and perhaps is born without the aptitude to experience them. And if so, there are those who will tell you that you represent a superior type of humanity. Therefore whether if not so, or whether so, why worry?

I do not, indeed, myself think that the inaptitude for the function of religion — ancient as the religious emotions are — represents a higher stage of development. But I am sure that either the function is there or it is not there, and that no intellectual speculations will take its place or hasten its manifestation. Religion, like love, develops and harmonises our rarest and most extravagant emotions. It exalts us above the commonplace routine of our daily life, and it makes us supreme over the world. But, like love also, it is a little ridiculous to those who are unable to experience it. And since they can survive

quite well without experiencing it, let them be thankful, as we also are thankful.

May 16. — I find that when I remark to a musician that the violin is not a woman's instrument, he agrees emphatically, apparently accepting the statement as too incontrovertible to need argument. Yet to me it seems that the fact that I — and apparently others also — often find it hard to experience complete satisfaction at the spectacle of a woman with a violin needs some explanation, and conversely, also, the fact that, to me at all events, the spectacle of a man with a violoncello causes a corresponding dissatisfaction.

It seems the reverse of what one would expect. The smaller instrument, one would unthinkingly say, must be the woman's, the larger one the man's, and when one reaches a monstrosity like the double-bass, so it may be. But there are other points to be noted. A high muscular tension and nervous adjustment are required in at once holding and bowing and fingering a violin. The perfect master shows a triumphant ease and joy in the attainment of this mastery, his instrument seems almost a part of himself, his tension has put on flexibility and grace; so that it is good even to look at him as he plays.

To refer only to the past, I remember how unforgettably a young and eager god Sarasate looked — I mean in early days before he acquired the heavy and sodden air of his later years — as he faced and challenged, it seemed, his audience. But the woman violinist, however well she may play, so often looks rigid and strained; she reminds one of the second-rate strong man of the music-halls, who, indeed, performs the feat, but at such an obvious cost one wishes he had attempted something less. For, whatever the art may be — whether playing at music or playing at life — there is no mastery until ease is attained.

The 'cello has not to be similarly supported, and the 'cellist sits in the attitude of apparent repose which suits a woman. A man usually looks a little awkward with a 'cello between his knees, like a man nursing a baby. It appears to demand no exorbitant muscular effort; but to respond to it emotionally is what a man can with difficulty do in the 'cellist's attitude without looking a little ridiculous, although he can triumphantly do so in the violinist's. So it is that most of the famous women who play the violin cultivate a coldly professional air, but not the men; and so also most of the famous men who play the 'cello, but not the women.

I realise it afresh this evening as I watch Guilhermina Suggia playing Schumann's rather mysteriously beautiful violoncello concerto. Leaving aside the question of technical achievement, the emotional response to her instrument is more sensitive than a man's can well be. The instrument seems to become part of herself. Her movements are larger and freer, with all the charm of skill combined with instinct; her enraptured Oriental face is lighted with a joyous smile. The vision answers to the music.

These considerations are not relevant? Well, so be it. — *Andiamo.*

May 28. — I am frequently brought up against the contempt of ritual in life. It is a widespread feeling, most usually, of course, directed against religion, especially, among ourselves, that of the Catholic Church, in its ancient and fantastic, seemingly absurd and unnatural shapes. When in the last century the Evangelicals invented the term "Ritualistic" for a kind of ritual they disliked, they felt sure they were appealing to a sound common-sense principle of life.

Yet all social life is ritualistic. You cannot walk along the street or enter a house without observing a ritual which you could not violate without an overwhelming sense of guilt. A child

has not yet grown up to the sense of ritual. Imagine yourself doing in public the things a child does! Human society, as much that of the savage as of the civilised, seems, in practice, if not in theory, impossible without ritual, however we may have simplified it, or conventionalised it, from its primitively more elaborate and sacredly significant forms. The ancient Chinese, who had so profound a feeling for the essential things of life, based morals on ceremony and music. It is impossible to construct even Utopia without ritual, however novel a ritual it may be, and even Thelema was an abbey.

It is not only society, it is all life, that is full of ritual, ancient and fantastic, seemingly absurd and unnatural ritual, that is indeed moulded into the very shape of life. Where can we find such wildly and diversely extravagant embodiments of ritual as in the greenhouses of Kew or the cages of the Zoo? For Nature is herself the maker of ritual. We are all ritualists, carrying out rites so widely diverse that we cannot enter into the spirit of one another's ritual. Yet, whether devised by Nature's direct mechanistic action or through the human brain, it is all the manifestation of an underlying vital meaning.

The diversity of the world, therefore, is natural. Yet not less natural is this inability to

accept its own diversity. It is by limitation — the limitation which all art involves — that Nature becomes diverse, fantastic, seemingly artificial. It is by that same limitation that these diverse forms cannot accept each other. I recall the critical, disdainful gaze of a small terrier as he stood still to watch a great goose pass by. Let us therefore accept with joy the diversity of the world, and with equal joy its inability to accept its own diversity. For that also is delightful.

June 2. — If it were permitted me to revisit the earth for a brief period every year, I would desire it to be the region around London, where I was born, where, I suppose, more of my life has been spent than elsewhere, and I would have the time be about the first week in June.

That week, it seems to me, is most likely to be, in this climate, the fairest week of the year. Then the days are warm, and yet it is delicious to lie in the sun; the trees are in full leaf, which still has not lost its virginal freshness, nor has wild music ceased to burden every bough; the shy and frail flowers of spring — tremulous with fear of keen winds and falling snows — are passed away; it is the season when the stellaria, which has ever been my flower among wild flowers, has formed its perfect goblet of fine texture, while

the rich flowers of stronger growth are everywhere opening with daring confidence in a summer to come. All is ecstasy.

So I meditate as I wander through the lanes and meadows of this unfamiliar remote corner of a near and familiar land, and gaze with rapture at the first full-blown wild rose in the hedge, so exquisitely fragile, so serenely self-assured.

June 25. — One of my first memories is of Margate, and the single impression that constitutes it is a small tower, a Martello tower, I suppose, which evidently intrigued my childish mind. The place must have changed since then about as much as my receptivity. I seem to recall hearing Margate spoken of as though it were the complete embodiment of vulgarity. Yet to-day, as I walk along its front at low water, and pause a little to the west of the old jetty where the flutted pillar-like lighthouse stands, Margate, with a touch of gaiety in its colour and its bright light, more than any place I have seen on this Kentish coast seems made to give joy to the artist. Again and again I have caught glimpses of delight, little completed pictures. Here the whole broad scene is a picture of delight. Close on the right the battered skiffs, with their rich brown half-furled sails, lying on the rippling pale

milky-green water against the high jetty wall of such softly variegated tones, present a vision of ancient peace for which our æsthetic sensibility has been trained by the great painters of Holland and East Anglia. The sun plays on the water, on the beautiful level expanse of sand, and on the black-green sea-weeded rocks of the foreshore, an essential note in the picture, but far to east the weary wings of the mist droop and brood over melancholy waters, and in the distance throw a fairy veil over the projecting foreland, while, to frame the scene, behind me the dull dun row of houses lies along the front.

Yet the whole scene would be empty if it were not for the people. I realised that when I came here for an hour at the same season three years ago, when air-raids had swept the east coast clear; I felt alone on a melancholy shore and swiftly fled to seek some spot where solitude is more natural. These people scarcely seem to bear close inspection, though doubtless if one stripped them of their clothes one might still see revealed the grace of the beautiful compasses which have measured the world, and if one pierced beneath the skin still perhaps find within some real individual human soul. But regarded simply as splashes of more or less bright colour, scattered by the happy hand of Divine Chance over the

whole picture, they are perfectly right. They give life and movement to that picture; they are woven into the underlying elements in an exquisite and rhythmic web, the harmonious union of the warp of Art with the woof of Nature, which I scarcely seem to see achieved in the same way elsewhere on this English coast.

July 12. — I note that Garcia Calderon in his excellent book on Latin America seems passingly to suggest that he regards Ariel and Caliban together as the symbolic representative of the English spirit, much as we may regard Don Quixote and Sancho Panza together as the complete representative of the Spaniard. Whether in the vast jungle of Shakespearian commentary this idea has ever been worked out, I have no knowledge; it may have been, even to the last detail. At all events, it seems an idea that is worth bearing in mind. Most nations present two totally unlike aspects. A nation that failed to do so would probably fail also to play any great part in the world.

Of no people could this be more emphatically said than of the English. Napoleon, like other observers before and since, said that the English are a nation of shopkeepers. To yet some others they have seemed a nation of singing birds. On

the one hand, as so many foreigners have stated, often with a touch of contempt, practical, cold, short-sighted, cautious, hard-headed, grasping, unimaginative; on the other hand, as they have said just as often and with a touch of enthusiasm, idealistic, humanitarian, daring, adventurous, extravagant, high-pitched, imaginative. In reality we are both; so it has come about that Caliban has given us an Empire (as indeed the Spanish American remarks) and Ariel a Shakespeare. It is, in fact, the combination of those two elements which produces the characteristically English quality, what is unsympathetically called cant or humbug being the inevitable outside manifestation of their union. They may even be united in the same person, and our most ethereal poets have been well able and content to earn their living by keeping a shop, or preaching sermons, or carrying out the most varied and tedious round of official duties; Caliban is the materialistic aspect of our Ariel, Ariel the spiritual aspect of our Caliban.

The achievement of Shakespeare — however instinctive and unconscious it may have been — in thus finally embodying and symbolising the English Genius adds a further seal to the fascination of *The Tempest*. Nowadays I am not much drawn to read the plays of Shakespeare. Their

extravagance no longer attracts me; the fury of their passionate interest in life ceases to be of much concern as one recedes from the combat of life. But I am more and more drawn to *The Tempest*, and my thoughts are often lingering over its loveliness. Here Shakespeare has emerged from the conflict, even though it may possibly have been by shipwreck; he had passed beyond tragedy and beyond comedy, beyond and above to a serene air in which they could at last be seen as one by the magician Prospero, who is the final embodiment of Shakespeare's inner self. Prospero's return to his dukedom was a weak concession to a stage convention. One knows that in his heart Shakespeare also knew that Prospero would never return. For an earthly dukedom can mean nothing to the man who has finally grasped the whole universe in his vision, as an evanescent mist, and stands serenely on the last foothold and ultimate outlook of the world.

August 6. — The train stopped for a long time — for everything here is uncertain now — at Kenmare, and a girl of some sixteen years stood on the platform near our third-class compartment, a simple country girl. When she turned her face towards us I saw the most dazzling and heavenly eyes that I have ever seen anywhere in the world.

They were blue, and their quality of almost abstract loveliness was immensely enhanced by rather thick black eyebrows. When those wondrous eyes were directed towards one, all the rest of her form seemed to become invisible. It was only when she turned aside that I was able to observe that, apart from this rare combination — it used to be called the Celtic type by anthropologists, but I have seen it nowhere else so pronounced in the south of Ireland — she was just a simple pleasant brown-haired girl, and not, as it seemed when one gazed at those eyes, a visitant from some other sphere.

She evidently noticed my admiring gaze, and she leisurely entered our compartment, with her little packages and a newspaper. But she was shy. She glanced for a few moments at her paper and then she stood up and looked out of the further window. The next station, Kilgarvan, was hers, and the platform was on our side. It was my privilege to open the door for her. She murmured a shy "Thank you" and swiftly disappeared. But the memory of those eyes will always remain.

August 8. — The red-bricked house, once an earl's home, is now a mere shell, burnt out just before the War, and left since untouched, with

all that surrounds it, on this height whence one overlooks, as nowhere else so well, the Lakes of Killarney and the hills beyond. There are terraces in the Italian manner, and formal gardens of box-trees in the Dutch manner, and little summer-houses, and great trees on the slopes behind. Now Nature is adding her own wild beauty to the beauty that Man made, and this deserted spot appeals to us as no spot on our course through this island, unless perhaps Glengariff, has yet appealed. Here we resolve to celebrate the rites of our Sunday in Ireland.

There are no tourists nowadays. At long intervals some stray local visitor appears, lingers a few moments, departs. For the rest, this lordly domain is ours alone, through all the morning hours, as we walk side by side up and down the terraces or sit together in some neglected arbour, and I taste at leisure the joy of this delicious presence, which for so long has been only a dream in memory, and awhile we read aloud and discuss some poem of Donne, and linger in frank discourse of life and of death, of all the possibilities the universe may hold. For we know that here we have reached one of the rare summits of existence, and our hearts uncurl like flowers and lean together, to shed each on the other its sweetest perfume.

Again, as the afternoon wears away, we ascend our sacred height, to inhale together the most exquisite moment of the day in the little shelter consecrated by the chalice of our communion. Soon the parting sun throws on the hills a golden radiancy — faint reminiscence of the sun-smitten Acropolis — and as the twilight deepens and chills we too leave with entwined arms. But we both know that the departing day is graven on our hearts.

November 19. — When I was living in Athens I could see, well framed by my window, above the sculptured buildings of University Street, the chapel-crowned height of Lycabettos. It is the only imposing height close to Athens, but the Greeks, who loved little things, made much of the Acropolis and of still more insignificant rocks and hillocks around, and scarcely seem so much as to have seen Lycabettos, which they were content to leave for the purpose of astronomical observation. So that when I went to Athens it came upon me with surprise that I had, it seemed, never so much as heard the name of the only real Athenian hill.

I soon learned to love Lycabettos better, and feel more at home there, than any place else in Athens. One has a fine view from that height

over city and sea and distant mountains. And one is at peace, and free to enjoy one's own society. For though an eccentric native may sometimes find his way up there, the ordinary practical Greek — evidently in this respect, at all events, at one with the Greek of antiquity — sees no reason whatever for wasting his time by laboriously climbing up a hill that leads nowhere. Moreover, Lycabettos in various of its characteristics singularly reminded me of Cornwall, and as I reclined through the day on its slopes, beneath the pleasant March sunshine of Attica, with my papers and my books, I would often pause to dream of ancient lost days in Cornwall.

Now, after an interval of five years — a short interval, it may seem, but long enough to bridge eternity — I am really once more in Cornwall. It is not, indeed, the Cornwall that I knew, this northern stretch of coast depending on Padstow, but a Cornwall with various new shades of difference. Here the rock is slate, so that Nature plays at being a Cubist — as the artist friend I am staying with here cannot fail to note — and builds up the cliffs with random oblong striated blocks, polished black or dun in colour, now and then veined with marble or splashed with yellow lichen. The cliffs are soft, of friable and more recent shale, but slate is ancient and hard (as

those know who have ever sought the remains of their ancestors in old churchyards and been lucky enough to find them beneath inscribed tombs of slate), so that all sorts of fantastic rock shape and rock bridges and porched caves, in what Pepys would have called the "romantic" style, may here be found as nowhere else in Cornwall. At all events I do not know where else the rocks are so hard, or the cliffs so rugged, or the waves that beat against rocks and cliffs, to break in such varied clouds of spray even when the sea seems calm, so endlessly attractive to watch.

Now is the time of year when Cornwall has often seemed to me loveliest. The air is soft, inspiring to spirit as well as to lungs. The sun is warm and as long as it stays in a cloudless sky I, too, can stay here, feeling my cheeks tingle with its chemical warmth as I write. Now, too, the butterfly visitors of the summer season have long since all fluttered away, and since there are few inhabitants here, and no railway or other method of public locomotion within five miles, I may count all the splendour of the coast my own and wander about for hours without seeing a single person, scarcely a sign even of civilization, so that I must sometimes remove my shoes and socks to cross a stream because there is neither ford nor bridge.

Yet, while this region has its own traits, it is still, as I know in my nerves and see with my eyes, the Cornwall with which the greater part of my active life on earth has been inextricably blended. As I recline on the untouched sands and the waves creep up towards my feet, influences come out of the past to wrap me round and round. I am within the circle of a sacred halo iridescently woven of sadness and joy, of tenderness and peace.

November 23. — I have brought down with me to this sunny cove — where all day long I may remain undisturbed by any foot save of the gulls on the sands or the crows on the cliff above — the beautiful and individual little commonplace book of choice things, prose and verse, familiar and unfamiliar, which Robert Bridges, the Poet Laureate, published in 1915. A poet of so high a quality, a connoisseur of such fine taste, a man of such lofty impulse, so lifted by noble contemplation over the passions of the herd, it is a rare pleasure to brood reverently on the pages of this Anthology, wayward and exquisite.

But I read the Preface — and with a shock of horror. This esoteric poet and scholar, this high-minded recluse, securely perched, one imagined, on a summit of the spirit far removed from the

base passions of the mob, reveals himself as the most pharisaic of self-righteous Jingoes, as a war-monger of the kind we associate with our popular gutter-press, as the inspired prophet of Hysteria. Here are the familiar catchwords and counters and despicably one-sided accusations which have rendered the Great War for ever nauseous. No single glimmer of a suspicion that what he says of the Germans may perhaps also be said of their English cousins, no perception that the cold-blooded atrocities of the blockade easily outweigh those committed in hot blood, no insight to see that the frightfulness of the Germans in Belgium is put into the shade by the more ruthless and more reckless frightfulness of our "heroes and saints" in Ireland, against men and women and children who were not remote foreigners speaking an unknown tongue, but of our own nation and speech, inflicting physical and moral wounds of which I saw the fresh traces every morning three months ago. This Preface to *The Spirit of Man* is fit to be held in memory as a monument to the imbecility of that Spirit under the influences of war even when embodied in the person of a superior man; for there are times, said Carlyle of old, though he might have said it to-day, when the creed of persons in authority—and surely Bridges is among us a person in spiritual

authority — becomes either a Machiavellism or an Imbecility.

No doubt the Poet Laureate has since repented in sackcloth. He has, indeed, of late been distinguished by encouraging others to hold out the hand of friendship to Germany. But it is easy even for the ordinary man to be just and humane, as well as wise, after the event, let alone a man who is able to present, as in this book, the antidote to the poisons he himself exhibits. So, although it may seem unkind to refer to the past, the occasion is profitable for meditation. We are told nowadays that the Herd Instinct, which has proceeded so far as to mould large isolated nations, will in course of time proceed yet farther and attain the form of a Universal Herd Instinct, embracing all Humanity; but our movements towards that end are likely to be excessively slow when we realise the state of mind of even our Superior Persons. Certainly long before that consummation it would seem likely that we and all the generations of our civilisation will have disappeared in the Pit. Well, it is certainly no more than we deserve. Let us depart smiling. There are others to come.

December 10. — It occurs to me, as I wander here, afar from the mad world, over these sunny

and undulating Cornish Downs, tasting the belated summer I missed amid the sad ruins of tortured Ireland, it occurs to me that the day will come, and is indeed now here, when the men of to-day will be judged by their attitude towards the Great War.

When I look into myself, I seem to see that I already apply that test instinctively. I think, for instance, of my attitude towards that poet — surely I have not forgotten his name? — to whose work I had been drawn before he won a definite public recognition. I had even bought his poems — which one hardly does for the sake of the beautiful eyes of any obscure poet — rather arid poems, indeed, a little dark, not always musical, yet, it seemed, the outcome of a personality with a genuine vision and subtle emotions, some of which made an intimate appeal. But he published a book in which were some feeble little patriotic verses about the War. The great poet knows how to show love of his country greatly, even sometimes by chastising it. But here was merely the overflow of the feminine hysterical mob passion, however altered in external guise. There was nothing more to be said. One may smile tenderly when a frightened woman screams and runs, but one scarcely feels called upon to acclaim a gesture of greatness. One is merely in the presence of weakness.

Yet perhaps we should resolutely determine to see more in it than that. The Great War has not merely been the test of a man's nobility of character; it has been the test of his devotion to the cause of humanity, to the supreme good of the world. Little enough, as we know, the herd cares for that. But if we want to find out what our would-be spiritual and intellectual leaders are worth, let us search diligently to find out their records during the War. Have they in speech or action encouraged that War? Have they spoken evil of those who fought on the other side? Have they pharisaically asserted their own superior self-righteousness? Have they like imbeciles accepted the empty catchwords of their politicians? If not, it is well, and we may hold up our heads. But else they are judged — and we who made them leaders are judged — for by their own mouths they are declared foul emanations of the passions of the crowd, Poison Gas made Flesh. It is meet they are branded on the brows with the Mark of the Beast to which they have sold what they call their souls. So all their fellows may know whom they had to thank for the blessings of the Great War. And if they show their gratitude by hardening the muscles of their arms, and gathering all the serpents they can find to make a scourge to lash the backs of

these leaders until not one of them is left, perhaps, after all, there might not be less joy on earth.

That impulse may well move within us all in so far as we possess any fibre of that spirit which raised Man from the slime and some day, possibly, may raise him further yet. But "in so far" may not be very far. We know also that Man is a gregarious animal, like the Pig — that fellow gregarian we so often hypocritically malign — and we know all about the Gadarene swine, and we know how prudent it is to cast the pearls of our wisdom elsewhere than before them. So we must be prepared to accept good-humouredly the reply of the average person to any invitation to lift Man that further inch higher, a reply that is sure to be a cheerful: "I don't think."

The world is essentially Absurd. We usually fail to see it for the good reason that we fail to see the world at all. We rarely have that Intuition of the Absurd, that power of seeing the world whole and apart from our personal ends which Bergson has in his mellifluous way explained Intuition to be. But it is a part of its Absurdity that there should be a little thread of Reason running through the world, and in so far as we discern that thread, and hold by it, we have attained the Intuition of the Absurd, we have seen

the world with the eyes of God, we have lifted ourselves above the Herd in the Slime.

December 15. — The long straight waves advance swiftly across the little bay on this open Atlantic coast, with what seems a joyous eagerness beneath the cloudless blue sky; their crests slowly rise and curve forward to fall in foam from which a fine white smoke ascends, and at their flanks on each side of the bay they crash, to break variously and delightfully over the great rocky boulders of slate scattered fantastically along the shore, leaving large basins here and there in the rocks, often deep and full of clear water, bright mirrors shining in the sun, touched now and again by the exhilarating northwest wind into ever varying ripples, endlessly flowing and shining lines of light, revealing all the beauty and significance of light, so that I never grow tired of watching their delicate and graceful play.

Alone but for a few meditative gulls, I sit among the rocks and dream of the miracle of this restless, antiseptic sea that for millions of years has been slowly and tirelessly absorbing all the rejected filth that the Earth and now Man can pour into it, and still to-day, as at the first, sends forth its fresh procession of waves in Purity and Joy, for the sacred lustration of an Evil World.

There is, it is true, a difference. The sea has become a little salter, though not more antiseptic than the earth's increasing foulness demands. For we are making ever greater demands on the sea, forever making harder the "priestly task of pure ablution." Even in this little remote bay, with scarce half a dozen simple little houses near, there is visible, just above high-water mark, obscene human rubbish of all kinds, which it will take long years for the wind and the sea to sweep away and purify and transmute.

Yet there are people among us, and not a few, who view with complacency the vast increase of the world's population everywhere taking place, people who would even urge the human procreative impulse to still wilder excesses. Until every square yard of the earth is intensively cultivated by Man, until the virulent air is soaked with the noxious fumes of human machinery, until the sea is poisonous with human effluvia, until all earth's shores are piled high with the sordid refuse of human maleficence, it seems to these people that the world will never feel happy.

This is not an imaginary possibility of evil, lying in some remote and problematic future. We are faced by it, here and now, in every so-called civilised country of the world. It is not less threatening in the Australian Bush than in

Europe or America, for those old lands are in any case damned and the new lands might yet be saved. In the early days of the world, even until a few centuries ago, there was no unnatural and inhuman quarrel between Man and Nature, for Man was still even in his external life — as at heart he must ever be — in harmony with Nature. But now, through superfluity of cleverness and wickedness — however admirable each of these qualities may be in moderation — Man has involuntarily entered into a contest with Nature, fatal alike to him and to her, yet a contest from which it is hard to draw back. Its fatality for Nature we see on every hand. As regards one small corner of the world, Dr. James Ritchie, who speaks with authority, has lately drawn a terrible picture in his substantial work on *The Influence of Man on Animal Life in Scotland.* Man arrived late in Scotland — he had already reached the Neolithic stage — and he found a rich fauna there on his arrival. He proceeded to destroy utterly the nobler fauna of free and beautiful creatures — many of them working for his good had he but known — and replaced it by a degraded fauna, virtually of his own creation, and yet only existing to prey upon him. He found the reindeer and the elk and the wolf and the brown bear and the lynx and the beaver and

the otter and the buzzard and the bittern and the water-ousel and the golden eagle and the sea eagle and the osprey and the great auk. And he killed them all. And in their stead he placed by countless millions the rabbit and the sparrow and the earthworm and the caterpillar and the rat and the cockroach and the bug, scarcely or at all found there before he brought them, and they have flourished and preyed. For, as Ritchie has shown, Man's influence upon Nature, even when it seems but tiny and temporary, is yet in its total effect greater than imagination can grasp.

Scotland is but a small part of the world, and (so at least every Scottish man who has turned his back on it tells us) among the more favoured parts. Other regions have suffered more, and the best regions most, though they have produced no Ritchie to tell the tale. Everywhere we see Man to-day surrounded by a cloud of animal and vegetable parasitic vermin, from rodents to bacteria, multiplying as he multiplies and even more rapidly, so that he can never overcome it, preying upon him and slaying him, rendering him, indeed, in the process so poisonous that when a boatful of apparently healthy civilised Europeans is landed on a remote island inhabited by simple natural men it has sometimes left death-spreading infection behind. The old Greek

myth of Chronos and Zeus has at length been translated into prosaic fact. Man has slain Nature, the Mother that gave birth to him and devastated all the wonder and beauty of the world that was given to his charge. Now in his turn he is about to be slain by the swarm of living things he has himself in effect created.

Yet there is still a way of escape open to Man. If, even yet, he should gain conscious and deliberate control of his own fatal power of reproduction, if he could learn to bring his own kind back again into better adjusted perspective with Nature, by decreasing his reproductive exuberance to increase the possibilities of free and exalted living, he would be making what seems to many foolish people the Great Renunciation of life which would yet be in reality the Great Triumph of life.

There are thinkers who have occupied themselves with the problem of the exact mode of Man's ending. Some imagine it will be by an epidemic of collective insanity, of which germs may already be detected. Others, a little more hopeful, believe that Man will see things as they are at last, and act accordingly, though only when it is too late to save any fragment of the earth worth saving.

Yet to-day is not too late if Man but knew, not

too late to save the world, or at least to win what is left of it for spacious and pleasant living to a finer human race that had become the reasonable artists of its own size and shape. To-day is still offered a Choice — "brief and yet endless."

December 23. — The wind has been blowing a stiff gale from the west all night and sudden squalls have swept in now and again. This morning the wind has dropped and the sky for a while is blue. But the sea is still alive; her pulse beats mightily from the sting of the wind's kisses. Her body is still restless and writhing, her limbs far flung. Not to-day, as so often, is she sending in the slow solemn ranks of rollers to curve smoothly and break delicately as they come to land. To-day the waves rush in swiftly in great irregular masses, falling to pieces in their haste, to clash and melt in one another, or rise as they unite in a spasm of inverted cascades. Nearer in, the turbulent swift irregular waves crash wildly against the rocks in infinite variety of living motion, or roll back in some strangely irregular step of the dance-measure to leap into each other's arms, and then to bound on with renewed energy; and here mountains of foam arise as some huge boulder is struck; and here delicate whiffs ascend a few feet only, resting in the air

long enough for the eye to catch the outline of their beauty; and here the foam mounts and spreads like a huge hand closing tenderly all over some slope of rock, inserting its fingers lovingly into every cranny. And now, as the tide sweeps nearer, the exuberant foam is everywhere leaping in great joyous white flames on to the cliffs, and again I see it surging up even beyond the dark high hill that shuts off the next inlet of the sea, even where the hill becomes a green slope, leaping in spires, amid vaster masses of foam, a cloudy exhilarating mist which floats softly towards me, while a low deep rumbling bass seems to furnish the pivot on which the wild fugal dance turns in harmonious rhythm.

So it is to-day. So it was in days long æons before any of the things that we in our narrow sense call living moved on the earth. The waves clasped one another then with just as joyous love. There was life and there was play and there was art and there was music and dance. The same words would fit the waves then that we apply to our most admired beings of human flesh. But there was none to mark. So by some stress of unconscious desire Nature created her little mechanical living toys that could see and feel. It seemed not enough, so she created Man, who could not only see and feel but know, realising

the world from outside, as she realises it, incorporating her Godhead of the Seventh Day. Therewith her desire was fulfilled and there was nothing more to do. Nature has had her whim. There was not so much in it after all. And she had to pay for it. Man proved a dangerous plaything. Only one problem remains: How to dispose of him?

She will solve the problem some day. On that day the sea will still come rolling in with the same joyous life and the same bright beauty. But once a creature stood here who saw and felt and knew that beauty. It will have been enough.

December 24. — As I lay with closed eyes half asleep there appeared out of blankness on the curtain of my eyelid the vision of a beautiful anonymous feminine face, and in a few moments faded as involuntarily as it appeared. The like phenomenon is apt to happen to most people. Therefore the miracle of such creation out of seeming nothingness escapes attention. It scarcely seems worth notice save to those among us who now and then discuss hypnogogic hallucinations for the languid interest of a few psychological readers. It is only to the rare child of genius, whose vision is not dulled by familiarity, that the inexplicable marvel is apparent. Of such

was Leonardo da Vinci, who, after briefly summing up the familiar wonders of our dream life, can exclaim with awe: "Oh! maraviglia della umana spezie!"

To-day I look through a pretentious just-published book which contains a long series of photographs representing the course of the materialisation of a face not so unlike the face I saw last night. The author attaches much importance to this phenomenon, and seeks to build up a theory of psychic dynamism which shall explain the whole mystery of life. One need not grudge him his theory, however free one may oneself be from any anxiety to explain the whole of that mystery. Yet, granting the authenticity of these photographs — and I do not feel it necessary to dispute this — it scarcely seems to me that such "materialisation" furnishes any new and revolutionary basis for a theory of the universe, whatever bearing it may have on unrecognised aptitudes of the human mind. This woman, this medium, with her special organisation and special faith, has, we assume, succeeded in making the image of a beautiful human face visible to other eyes than her own. It slowly forms, and, in a little while, slowly disintegrates and fades. The like happened in my vision. The difference is that mine appeared spontaneously, and against

the inner curtain of my eyelid, so it was only visible to me. The medium's appeared against the background of her blouse, was visible to other people and affected the photographer's sensitised plate. The one vision would be as miraculous as the other if they were both equally rare, and the one vision remains as significant as the other vision so far as any theory of the universe is concerned. The materialised vision might well be merely a condensation and a moulding of the ordinary human "aura" which, it has been found, may be normally influenced by the will.

For the miracle of Man is always developing, though each new stage is but a further phase of the original miracle, and so brings no change into the universe. Saints of old walked with haloes round their heads, and painters painted them, many centuries before the human aura was detected by men of science. It is not many years since Dr. Kilner first found that by looking through a fragment of chemically prepared glass — though with care the unaided eye suffices — at a naked human form, the body is seen framed in an aura which varies at different times and in different persons. A few months ago, in Dr. Kilner's laboratory at Bury St. Edmunds, I was privileged to see — though like many other

things this can be seen, and then sometimes but elusively, only after a little training of the eye — the seemingly vaporous aura surrounding the head and body of a naked young woman who stood passively before a screen in a rather subdued light. Shelley sang of the sage "with inner glory crowned." He might have been pleased to know that we are all thus crowned with glory, and women to greater extent than men.

Yet the simplest and commonest things of the world are the greatest of miracles. I know no greater miracle than when from between the thighs of a woman one sees a complete new human being slowly emerge head first into the world. All our explanations, all our theories of descent, of heredity, our jargon, harsh or beautiful, of zygotes and chromosomes, do not make it explicable; they merely smother it in words, concealing rather than revealing. We are no further from miracle than when we fabled that Eve arose from the side of sleeping Adam into the Garden of Eden.[1]

[1] Thereupon I wrote to Dr. Kilner to inquire whether this fairly obvious identification of the normal "human aura" with the abnormal "ectoplasm," as it has been called, of the medium, had been suggested by others. The reply came from his daughter that he had died not very long after my visit. As often happens with those who work alone, and ahead of their fellows, his disappearance had not been noticed. But he lived just long enough to complete the second enlarged edition of his book on the human aura.

December 29. — The clouded sky hangs low, grey and tender, softly falling, now and again, in a fine almost imperceptible rain, for a mild and languid wind is coming from the west. As I stand on the northern headland of this bay I see how the smooth slaty sea swells into slow long billows, larger than I have yet seen here, that curve slowly over into spray. They swell and flow and rise so calmly, so majestically, so deliberately, that they seem to dream, as I seem to dream, that they are still on the far shoreless Atlantic where they can swell and rise and flow at ease. But here, suddenly, they crash against the dim dark rocks and break, with an immense surprise, into cascades of pearls and mountains of foaming snow, pausing in the air, it seems, in a momentary wonder, ere they fall and fade and float away in vapour. So it is along the coast as far as eye can see, and I watch, enthralled, the endless slight variety in the eternal harmony.

At the farm next door to where I dwell, in this thinly populated land, there lives an old man of ancient name, of a family privileged during long centuries to absorb the beauty and inspiration of this rare spot and become subdued by what they work in, "like the dyer's hand." Last night the farmer's wife died, never having gained strength after an operation performed a few days ago.

In the evening her husband had arrived home drunk from the nearest town five miles away; all day long a son-in-law and a daughter-in-law had been anxiously pestering the servant girl for the keys, entrusted to her care by the dying woman, of the box where she kept her money.

There are still, people tell me, regions of the earth abandoned to Nature and waiting to be reclaimed — I believe that is the word — by Man; there is still reason to believe, they solemnly warn us, that Man is not multiplying at the rate at which it is theoretically possible for him to multiply.

January 3, 1921. — Before Christmas, whenever I went up the road past the farmhouse on the other side of the valley, there were seven fat geese, settled side by side on the top of the broad wall of herring-boned slates along the roadside, who without stirring would cheerfully greet my approach with a chorus of loud cackling, and as I complacently passed in front of this enthusiastic ovation I would sometimes think how much pleasanter it may sometimes be to face the cackling of geese than of men. To-day when I passed I missed them.

If only Pontius Pilate knew! How surprised that indolent sceptical Roman official might be

could he know that the malefactor of whom he washed his hands and let go to the gallows would some day through that indifferent act become one with the Sun God, the Apollo-Dionysus of a new age, on whose Natal Altar millions of bloody sacrifices would all over the earth be offered up at the new birth of the Solar year by people who knew as little about it all as he knew, and cared no more! If he only knew! — And if we ourselves only knew the vast echoes of the things we do to-day!

January 9. — I recall, from some fifteen or more years ago, the sensation that was aroused by the discovery, a few miles from Padstow, of an ancient Celtic burying-ground, extending in time, it may be, until nearly as late as the coming of the Romans. Now I have walked to Harlyn Bay to visit the site of these finds and the fascinating little museum near by which holds some of the graves and their bones, as well as the delicate implements of slate that were found in them.

In those days, it would seem — some people, no doubt, will not be surprised — the Cornish may have been cannibals, for a collection of human bones has been found a mile or two away, chopped up into small pieces, and the long bones split downwards to extract the marrow, since

they reverently buried what they could not eat. They also had a way of placing their probably already dying friends alive in the grave, and then smashing their heads with a big stone, still to be found in the grave, with the hands of the corpse raised to protect the face. These graves were found beneath walls which they were apparently meant to sanctify and protect, and sometimes anxiety was felt lest the departed should escape and return to earth, for some of the urns containing incinerated ashes were turned upside down, so that for the spirit imprisoned within there should be no resurrection.

One is tempted at first to see something rather inhuman, almost cruel, in the customs of those ancestors of the Cornish people. Yet look at us, the English of to-day! We claim to be advanced, humane, even to be the banner-bearers of Righteousness; our Societies for the Protection of Animals are rolling in wealth — and look at us in Ireland, torturing and mutilating and slaying at random men, women, and children, and not staying for any reverent burial of the corpses. Let us beware of questioning the humanity and civilisation and justice of these old Cornish.

The Cornish, after all, were thoughtful of the dead. They considerately buried with them — as men had done for thousands of years before

them — the things they had needed during life and perchance might still need after death, in heaven or elsewhere. That was a custom that still sometimes persisted also in England as late as mediæval times. The Cornish, like the people in many other parts of the world, gradually spiritualised this notion; instead of placing really useful pots and other articles in the grave, they substituted poor specimens made for the purpose — as it were the ghosts of useful things instead of the things themselves — or else broken fragments, and at last threw into the grave mere shards and pebbles.

As I meditated on that evolution, an idea came to me that may well have come also to others. The handful of earth that in the Christian rite is thrown into the grave after the coffin is lowered, may it not be the survival, in a but slightly transformed shape, of the ancient custom of providing the dead with the utensils needed for the next world? On the one hand there is little difference between a handful of potsherds and a handful of gravel. On the other hand, it is not easy to see how the Christian rite could have arisen out of nothing. There is no obviousness about it, and the forced reason assigned for it in our Rite seems to be less a reason than a rationalisation of an existing practice. It all becomes intelligible

if we suppose that we have here a custom taken over by Christian priests from Pagans who would not dare to abandon it, and consecrated by a new and ingenious significance. Just in the same way it is, I suppose, that the rough stone pillars we see so often in Cornish fields, phallic appeals to the generative sources of Nature, we may well believe, were here and there sanctified by devout early Christians who carved a cross on them and left them for us to cherish. It is so, indeed, in all the uses of our lives, and at every point of good or evil we are the slightly transformed spirits of our ancestors.

January 14.—Two months by the sea, where the waves rolled in from eternity, alive like the whole Universe with a perpetual slight novelty in imperturbable monotony, where the ancient fantastic rocks faced sea and wind and rain and frost and gently yielded a fragment here and there to their urgency, at the rate, it seemed, of not so many tons by the century, where the birds circled in flocks over the verge of this last promontory into the ocean with just the same wondering hesitant movement as when they first began to learn the art of migration in the early world, where the rare human creatures planted in the land centuries ago now look like their own rare

and stolid ancient lichen-covered trees and arouse the same kind of feeling in the spectator — and then to be dropped suddenly in the London streets.

How thrilling it all is! I feel that I am the spectator at a super-cinema of the world. It is all so brilliant, so swift, so thin and so evanescent. The background of the picture may be sordid indeed, but one has no time to think of it in this unending stream of life and movement, these insistent shop-windows, these glaring lights, all these weary and fascinating women and girls, so variously bright in costume, with the careless abandonment of people who feel they are hidden in a crowd, the baskets of startlingly gay flowers for sale in the murky atmosphere, the bursts of crude music, almost intoxicating to ears so long unfamiliar, — I seem to have emerged from Eternity to enter the world of Time, for the scene is for ever changing, for ever hurrying on feverishly, urged by the calm, relentless, invisible Operator, for ever falling over the edge into a bottomless Abyss of Forgetfulness. This is civilisation.

I gaze at the spectacle and I dream of the world of Eternity I have left behind.

January 20. — Another Book about Goethe!

Among the rare great human persons that have risen on the surface of the earth to remain for ever

visible to our eyes, Goethe is the supreme unscaled Mount Everest. Every attempt to conquer that height and survey it all round and sum it up ends in failure, if not disaster, for the explorers. There are other great human manifestations on the earth which we brood over and seek to comprehend. There is Rousseau, for instance, like a vast cloud-mountain, made of iridescent vapour, which when men try to wrestle with it their hands merely close on themselves, and the mountain remains, part of the atmosphere they are breathing all the time. There are Shakespeare, Leonardo, wonderful summits, and yet critics have found accessible spots for their own joy and ours. But Goethe not only eludes the explorer, he seems to lure him to destruction. The fascination of this inscrutable height is indeed exerted on the most various and the unlikest people, even on this Scottish professor of palæographic history who devoted so much of his life to this latest Goethe book. And they have the most discrepant attitude toward the task, from awe to flippancy. They ascend by the most various paths and they have the most unlike experiences. But most of them return leaving a limb in some man-trap the mountain holds. They have not conquered the mountain, they have merely revealed their own limitation.

A reviewer who was, I believe, Henley, wrote of my first book that "that colossal sentimentalist," as he was pleased to term Goethe, stalked through the whole of it, though I had scarcely mentioned his name. — May my guardian angel continue to preserve me from writing about Goethe!

February 8. — A great engineering authority, Lord Headley, in his presidential address to the Society of Engineers yesterday, stated that immense progress is still possible in the practice of warfare, especially if we are ever able to harness the electrons. He foresaw a time when a general officer, sitting comfortably at his desk, might touch a button which would release destructive agencies capable of sweeping hundreds of square miles and annihilating the armies of the enemy, together with all other living things, while his own armies were similarly annihilated by the general officer in command on the other side similarly touching a button. What device should be adopted to enable the expectant nations to know which side had been victorious, Lord Headley fails to indicate. It would be useless to appoint impartial umpires at Headquarters on both sides to register the time when the buttons were pressed, so that the world might know which general got in his blow first, for the umpires would

both disappear in the general destruction. It is a difficult problem.

But, however that may be decided, it should be Mankind's unceasing prayer that the day may come swiftly, for it is essential that war should be brought to an end. Men have dreamed of various ways in which the prayer might be answered. Some have believed that the end might be gained by the growth of the instinct of Sympathy. Some have believed in the growing influence of Reason. But we see that human emotion is remarkably one-sided in its action, and as to Reason, it plays a very subordinated part in the mental processes even of the Superior Persons whom our democracies set up to rule the world. Until the time when the conquest of the birth-rate has become so firmly established that human "cannon fodder" is too dear to use, the method foreseen by Lord Headley seems alone to hold out hope for Mankind. One might have preferred other less radical methods of attaining the same end. But evidently it was not to be.

March 12. — Last week, when I was feeling, as ever since I left Cornwall I have felt, singularly firm against assault, Death, in his casual tentative indifferent way, just gave me a torturing prick with his scythe as he passed by, leaving me

alive but bleeding. Ever since I lie on my back invalid, for the first time in my active life, and whether he is likely to come again soon there is none to tell me.

Yet, I find, I remain serene, even continuously cheerful. For some years past I have accommodated my arrangements to Death and guided my activities accordingly, even though I may not yet have completed everything I had planned as the minimum — for I am content the maximum should go — of my Day's Work — my Day's Play — in the world. Without rest yet without haste — it is the law of my nature which I have no intention of changing now. My faith has carried me through so far and will accompany me to the end. Death is the final Master and Lord. But Death must await my good pleasure. I command Death because I have no fear of Death, but only love.

March 17. — From time to time, at long intervals, she would drift into my room, like a large white bird hovering tremulously over the edge of a cliff, a shy and sinuous figure, so slender and so tall that she seemed frail, yet lithe, one divined, of firm and solid texture. I speak of her as a woman, yet she was in a sense beyond the distinction of sex, at once a married mother and an adolescent

virginal youth, and these two together, not by any inharmonious clash, but lifted into the higher unity of a being who belongs to another race.

Yet let it not seem that at that time I made any observations so definite as these. This was still an altogether unknown instrument that was from time to time placed within my reach, as yet a meaningless instrument on which I could scarcely strike a random casual note. I hardly even sought to. I was, as ever, incurious, always content to wait for the revelation the Gods may in their grace bring me, just as I have waited for years, consciously or unconsciously, before the paintings or the poems of some great master, who was meaningless to me, until by little glimpses of vision, by sudden flashes of intuition before my purged eye, the Flame of Beauty at last was bared. For I would say with Plotinus that it is the business of the Gods to come to me and not for me to go to them. Thus it was then; and when I look back to those days I seem only able to recall in detail the intellectual brows, a little ascetic, they seemed, above that long waving form, and an occasional ripple of laughter, a shallow ripple, like the little sudden shudder that passes over the surface of a solemn pool of water among the rocks at low tide, touched by a quick breath of wind from the sea.

So it was that slowly only and by imperceptible degrees I learnt to see and to evoke by touch the mystery of this new Revelation that the Gods had brought to my humble door. It was a memorable step in the unfoldment when, one unexpectant day, the tall figure rose and approached and I felt cool kisses, like the rich petals of some tea rose, falling softly on my face, amid murmured words, and the rustle of long cool limbs for a moment gliding gently around my own. Therewith the slow process of my awakening was touched into sudden acceleration, the vague images that had been aroused in my mind began to crystallise; there was a new keenness of vision in my eyes and a new sensitiveness of touch in my hands. For the first time I knew clearly that this was a Person, of whatever nature and from whatever far world visitant, a Person, not only a gracious wreath of soft shy mist, for concealed beneath there was a massive even rugged frame and a latent power of strong impulse that was new to itself as to me. So I grew alert and reverent, ready to worship whatever Divine Image I might be able to discern through earthly envelopes.

It cannot have been long after that day, I began to perceive something even in the manner of the garments of this Person different from the

women I had known in the world. Her clothing was not something closely and firmly enswathing a loose body, with difficulty found and disentangled, and when found mostly featureless and insignificant. There was a certain rarity and distinction, an individual impress, in the few garments that she wore; yet personal as they were, one realised that they were not part of her, they seemed to fall away at a touch, she seemed able to glide out of them with no effort. The Person to whom these garments belonged, however shy and shrinking in a cold and alien world, might thus be native to a world where clothing was a grace of living, rather than an essential art of living, and the body itself too full of meaning, and itself too full of mystery, to need garments or to bear being garmented. I dimly divined this as I caught careless entrancing glimpses of this body.

I well remember the day on which it was first altogether revealed to me. Day indeed it scarcely was any longer. Twilight had come, the light without shadows when all familiar things grow mysteriously unfamiliar, the light in which alone we can imagine that immortal forms of sculpture might become soft and flexible and warm. I lay back on my couch, the curtains of the windows were still parted and a bright light from afar made

a clear pattern on the wall. We talked of I know not what grave things in art or in life, and as we talked she rose from the depths of her chair and it seemed by scarce an effort of disentanglement floated into my sight without a single garment left to veil the soft radiance of her form. The room was full of diffused light, yet so softened and dimmed that that illusion of night was present which ever imparts strength and assurance to women and maybe to angels. Yet this illusion of night was no more than the atmosphere made visible, in which this lofty Person shone not only in clear outline, but with all due variations of bright tone and gloom of shaded recesses. All the natural saliences of form were subdued. The shallow inverted bowls of the breasts were of a virginal shape astonishing to see, the firm belly no less, and only the little trace of a droop in the tender globes behind somehow indirectly suggested the touch of maternal fatigue. There was in this length in body and legs yet a measured and rightful proportion, so that one was reminded of those supreme Egyptian artists who — perhaps inspired by the neighbouring Dinka folk who are of all human people the most extravagantly and beautiful excessive in limb — drew upon their temple walls such divinely tall and slender gods and men. Yet here was no sche-

matically fantastic caricature. There was the tender almost pathetic breath of life emanating from her, emanating almost, one imagined, in fragrance, yet but imagined, for it was only by intimate contact that one might know or divine the scent and the taste of the mysterious salts and essences that distilled from the guarded places of her form and helped to suggest the firm underlying structure beneath a shape that at first glance seemed so ethereal, befitting large appetites and a great thirst for water and for wine, those two things which of all things that enter the human body have a significance, in purity and in hilarity, which is more than human and enable the human to drink of sources which are divine because alone they remain immortally incorrupt. So the vision before me was signed with the mark of an origin that seemed yet more hieratically remote than any racial sources to which her human kin bore witness.

In the human people we know, the mingling of race that must ever be present seems often to bring a clash and conflict of tendency in spirit, and almost it seems in body, a conscious struggle of higher and lower, an ever-present awareness of a bit in the mouth, and invisible ancestors who draw the reins to this side and to that even at the same moment. It never seemed so to me in

this Person. Even as in her form the virginal and the maternal were marvellously united into a harmony of adolescent youth, so it was in her spirit. The strange discrepancies of her soul lay peacefully side by side, the lion by the lamb. The thin austere lines upon her intellectual brows were the outward sign of a subtle brain that played among the glistening points of glacier heights, pursuing there delicate fancies of imagination that often seemed almost to elude perception, and wrought our human speech into harmonies as of stalactites of icicles grouped amid the rocks of the cliffs when a frost follows rain. Yet, without any violency of transition, she would linger maliciously over the stories of human weakness and brood deliciously over licentious images, until lascivious pearls of sweat gathered together in the sheltered recesses of the prostrate form lying passive, without movement, for the energy of passion is human and belongs not at all to those beings who seem to us to bear about their forms and their spirits something of the semblance of Eternity. Human creatures, when they are most human, distinguish between good and evil, they strive after the good, they seek to avoid the evil, it is even their desire to trample down their worse self and on that ruin to raise a better. In the perpetual effort of such

moral struggle, in the desire, even though it prove vain, to give of itself to other ends, their human nobility lies. But to Heaven all things are fair. Nature and the Gods are no more evil than they are good; moral nobility is not for them. "I am what I am": it is their perpetual affirmation, not, it need be, arrogantly, nor yet, it need be, meekly, yet always without struggle.

"I am": that always seems to the human mind the affirmation of the Most High, yet it is an affirmation out of a sphere in which there is neither high nor low in our human sense, just as we see there neither good nor bad. When that is realised, we have gained the deepest insight into the Divine that the years can bring us, we no longer rate too highly or too lowly what man has blindly reverenced as God or contemned as Nature. Like Arethusa or some immortal Nymph of the ice and the water, this mysterious Person appeared to me, sometimes in the silence, as it were, of glacial mountain heights, and sometimes on the lowlands of robustly gushing or gently rippling water. Yet there was no spiritual sense in which either the one or the other was truly high or truly low. There came before me the symbolically significant vision, the physical or the spiritual vision, in which this profound reality was made manifest and this lofty Person was revealed un-

der an aspect which seemed the incarnation of that living and profuse Nature which is neither high nor low. The tall form languidly arose and stood erect, taut and massive it seemed now with the length of those straight adolescent legs still more ravishing in their unyielding pride, and the form before me seemed to become some adorable Olympian vase, and a large stream gushed afar in the glistering liquid arch, endlessly, it seemed to my wondering eyes, as I contemplated with enthralled gaze this prototypal statue of the Fountain of Life, carved by the hands of some daring and divine architect, out of marble like flesh, that marble which has in its texture the mingled warm and matt tones of human flesh, mortal and immortal at once, motionless and passive, yet of wondrous energy, the image of creative arrogance; while on the firm austere lines of the face one read, not pride, but a shy and diffident smile, the fear lest to the merely human spectator that which is transcendent should be mistaken for what is gross.

Yet there is no language for mortals to whom are vouchsafed brief moments of intuition into the reality of a world which for all the daily purposes of life is merely a dull show fittingly expressed in dull words, nor are there any images to express meaningly to men what comes into the mind

when slowly one by one the scales have fallen from our eyes and we nakedly glimpse, once or twice or thrice on our course through the world and most of us never at all, one of those rare divine beings who pass veiled and disguised through life, as in mediæval days the old forsaken gods of Greece and Rome were said still to linger here and there in the world, with a cowl drawn over their flaming eyes, or a rough kirtle deforming the symmetry of their perfect limbs.

Before the inner eye of those who are drowning, they say, there pass in procession the significant visions of all their lives. As I lie here, floating back to life, there pass before my inner eye from among the pictures of those rare and lovely persons that here and there it has been given me as my supreme grace in the world to discern and to know, not those that are from long ago mine, closest and most tender, but this mysterious revealing Person, surrounded with a halo of silence and parted by half the world's space.

March 19. — When, as so often nowadays, I come upon the lofty contemptuous horror of war professed by Superior People — it is clearly manifested by the reviewers of Wilfred Owen's *Poems* in reproval or depreciation of that young poet's charges against our society — I fear I

am overcome by nausea. For where were these Superior People in 1914? They write in the very organs of public opinion which a few years ago were the resonant mouthpieces of War and Patriotism, the glorification of ourselves and the vilification of our enemies, and the tone of the voice, the turns of the phrasing, the complacency of superiority, are all the same. War to-day is neither better nor worse than it has ever been, merely a little more intensive because of our increased skill and a little more extensive because of the increased swarming of our much multiplied race. Long before this last war there were those who knew and struggled with the problems of this evil thing and used their little strength to try so to mould the world betimes that it might be eliminated. No man marked. And now this empty chaff of Superior People, that was blown along so gaily and irresponsibly when the wind of war raged, is blown along just as gaily and irresponsibly now when the wind is changed, with never a glimmering sense of its own imbecility.

No doubt the population of the world must consist, as Carlyle said, of "mostly fools." But one cannot help feeling that it might be better for it, and even for them, if the Superior People among them, at all events, were Honest Fools. "We shout for peace to-day," they might then

tell us, "we are all Pacifists just now. But wait a while. The day will come. Once more we shall shout for War as in 1914. Once more we shall joyfully send our Heroes to glory and erect hideous memorials to them afterwards. Once more we shall raise the banner of the War-to-end-War. Once more we shall cast the Poison-Gas of our hatred over the world."

That would be folly, but it would be honest folly. It would be the true prophecy of men who knew themselves. But men who know themselves are no longer fools; they stand on the threshold of the Door of Wisdom. There are few who stand there, and so we must be content with the world as we find it, striving indeed to make a new world by breeding out the foolish stocks, and, when we are not strong enough for that, standing aside to smile while they carry on their majority world, gleaning such ears of joy as may be left to us from the wonder of the spectacle, knowing that if we have missed our vision Nature's vision is still left to us.

March 27. — Every day I feel more keenly the advantage of being touched, however faintly, by a feather of Death's wing.

One's mind grows so much more active and alert; one becomes so supremely indifferent to

the things that are not, for oneself, eternal. We are told that age is garrulous, for ever repeating the same things, meandering along a path that might be endless for all the care the aged seemed to feel of the swiftly approaching End. So we are told. Though I should myself have thought that there are many old men like Bishop Stubbs of whom they say that, when a friend took him into a fine library, he remarked: "What is the use of a library to me, a man who hasn't time to take a Seidlitz powder?" But I suppose we are to admit that they tell us truly. And, if so, perhaps the reason is that the old do not feel aware of that End. It is when we are young that we possess that awareness most keenly. I have never written any welcoming Ode to Death since I was fourteen. But the old have followed the same path so long; they have never seen the End; it begins to seem to them immeasurably far off; they have so much time to waste. So how wholesome a reminder it is that the axe should be placed in one's hands for a moment, that one should be permitted to feel how sharp is its edge. There is no time then left for anything that is common or mean, for

> "at my back I always hear
> Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near."

I quote the poet whose tercentenary falls just

now, the poet who was neither Cavalier nor Roundhead, or perhaps both at once, and thus is peculiarly congenial to me since I inherit the blood of those who were fierce on both sides.

So in the brief moments that are left to me I desire no longer to say over again the things I have said before, but rather to say afresh the things still left at my heart unsaid, and to make one final effort to Express the Inexpressed, to squeeze an ever finer essence from the crude juice of the wine-press of life, to help to form that Word in which Man is for ever slowly creating the Universe.

At odd moments it may still be well to be garrulous. It is not meet that we should give any painful shock to legitimate Human Expectations. I fear I may have given too many in my time.

April 6. — It is late afternoon. I have come downstairs and sit out by the edge of the little wood. The birds chatter and sing, and there is a haunting familiarity in their trivial music, as though it had once been idly murmured in the background of some intimate and delicious thing that stirred my heart long ago and lives still in far depths. Where was it?

And so my thought goes instinctively wandering back along the leafy corridors of wooded memories, in this land or in that, through avenues

of beeches or of pines, lovely and endeared by love, seeking vainly to find among the branches where was that poignant experience that now comes vaguely and deliciously back in the twitter and song of the Kentish birds. And as I follow in memory the dear Presences that once made more lovely the lovely woods I have known, still vainly seeking, the birds seem to mock my search: "Where, where, where was it? Where was it — *where?* Where, where was it?"

April 13. — In an anonymous but admirable article on Baudelaire I find "Les Yeux des Pauvres" casually referred to as "the most cynical of all his cynicisms about love." The remark strikes me because I am always a little sceptical — I will not say cynical — over the use of that word "cynical," even when applied to the animal from which it is ostensibly derived, and I doubt if I have ever myself used it quite seriously. I even suspect that, like the word "asinine," it is a sad revelation of human nature.

Let us see. In "Les Yeux des Pauvres" the poet imagines himself seated with his mistress before a new and splendid café, glasses and decanters in front of them, when he becomes aware of a poor man holding two small children by the

hands, and all three gazing into the attractive establishment. The poet is seized by a feeling half of pity, half of shame, and turns for sympathy to the beautiful eyes of his companion. But she merely remarks: "Can't we have those tiresome people sent away?" "So incommunicable is thought," the poet reflects, "even between people who love each other."

Now there are women of that sort; we all know them; and they bear stamped clearly all over them the nature of the material of which they are made. No need to "love" then to find out what that material is; it may be discerned at the outset. There are women, also, of another sort. I have known them and loved them well, women whose native impulses of tenderness and of help have leapt to feeling and perhaps to action before my own reflections of pity or of shame have had time to take shape. The poet has chosen, or is pleased to represent himself as having chosen, a woman of the other sort. His obtuse perception therein has been perfectly mated with her obtuse emotions, and he is so foolish as not to be able to see the resultant harmony. So on this occasion "cynicism" is merely the failure to recognise that one has been foolish. Need we debase a good old Greek word to express anything so commonplace?

April 18. — Now that I sleep lightly at night, since I rest all day, I hear, on this outskirt of the Kentish town, now and again in the hour following midnight and again in the early dawn when all birds else are still silent, the crowing of cocks.

To me there is something pleasant and reassuring in this sound. I share not at all the feeling of those who hear it with horror. I am even tempted to think they suffer from an evil conscience. For the cock is traditionally associated in the Christian world with the voice of conscience and the violation of it that brings remorse. Peter might well go out and weep bitterly a certain night when the cock crew. For all his life after there could be no natural sound so keen and so poignant as the crowing cock, and I can well understand how at last he sought refuge from it in the largest city in the world and became, according to the legend, Bishop of Rome. But, for my own part, I experience no such feeling.

I suppose that the Domestic Fowl was the first bird enslaved by Man, and perhaps the first Oriental creature artificially introduced into our part of the globe. Yet after millenniums of domestication the Red Jungle Fowl of southeastern Asia — however degenerate he may have become and even, they say, with the final languid note added to his cry — remains almost

as proud and independent as our hieratic Egyptian cat. It is even like an exotic in Nature, and though I have never heard it in its Asiatic home it scarcely seems to me it can ever have fitted into the natural chorus. There is a disdainful aristocratic isolation about this bird which chooses earth's most silent moments to assert itself and trample down the phenomenal aspects of Nature in order to proclaim the triumph of some higher order. So it has never been idealised by those who love Nature — no Wordsworth has written a sentimental ode to the cock — but rather by those who have sought the symbol of vigilance, of the moral affirmation of the Universe, of the call to Man to be awake and watchful. Yet there is in that call the note of knowledge and assurance. At the hour when human vitality is at its lowest ebb, and despair nearest to hand, then it is that the watchman of the earth raises his voice and the cock crows: All is well with the world.

April 30. — I went a few days ago to see the Phœnix's representation of *The Witch of Edmonton*, written three centuries ago by the ingenious collaboration of Rowley, Dekker, and Ford, and seldom seen since, though familiar to all who read the old plays of our great dramatic

period. But for my own part, it is so many years since I had to concern myself with this play that now it comes before me, for the first time on the stage, as a new revelation of delight.

I was curious to know what the old play meant for the accredited critics of our decayed dramatic stage to-day. I find that, with one or two really brilliant exceptions, it means just nothing. They are indifferent or repelled or disapproving.

The ideas that rule the Phœnix production seem at some points mistaken and not to represent the thought or the emotional tone of the dramatists. Yet it is hard to see how anyone who is himself alive and moderately aware of the interest of life can fail to discover what a revelation this play is of life at one of the most keenly alive of all the ages of our English story. The supreme artists are not concerned to bring directly before us the life of their own times, though they cannot fail to do so indirectly. *Faustus* and *Lear* and *'Tis Pity she's a Whore* of Ford, the greatest of the dramatists concerned in *The Witch*, tell us little of the Elizabethan age and the scarcely less acutely living Jacobean age which immediately followed and was indeed its corollary. Many a less great play tells us much more. *The Witch* cannot fairly be called a great play by anyone, though three accomplished playwrights united

to compose it: Ford with his pure poetry and his subtle psychological insight, his sense of the tragedy of the soul; Dekker, the comic realist, so tender and humane, among the first to comprehend the grievous fate of the witch, whom half a century later even the scholarly physician, Sir Thomas Browne, was willing to help to murder; and Rowley, with his masculine sense for dramatic passions and his rough grasp of material stagecraft — these three have happily combined to build up a play which incarnates the world they lived in, its crudity and its ideality, its humanity and its spirituality, its Devil in person and its simple honest shrewd fool who is able to put the Devil to flight. All this is so richly representative of the age that produced it, and of no other age, that when that age had passed the play was no longer fit for the popular stage.

But one would have thought that an age like ours, which has no English stage of its own worth troubling about, except so far as Shaw may still bring life to it, might have had the intelligence to declare, through the mouths of its representative experts in dramatic matters, that here at all events was the real living play of a real living age, the age indeed that we are taught to regard as the greatest in English history.

June 4. — I am pleased to see the enthusiasm aroused alike among critics and the public by the "Cuadro Flamenco" which Diaghileff has had the insight to insert into the Russian Ballet performances of this season. I am also a little amused. Dancing has been going on in Spain ever since Spain became known to the world, and no doubt long before. In all the southwest of the peninsula these little semi-circular groups might be seen shouting and dancing and clapping and stamping and singing to the guitar in accordance with traditional art and ritual. They are dying out now; they have been passing away during all the years that I have known Spain; and at this final moment Spanish dancing, in something like its native shape, comes to our insular critics and our insular public as an astonishing revelation of art and energy and beauty. This cannot but be pleasing, even at so late a moment, to a lover of Spain, though one has to admit that while this group and its performances are redolent of Spain it was a mistake to reclothe it in artificial costumes when the native costumes are so beautiful and so befitting; that it was absurd to dub the dances "Andalusian" when the most popular item was the Aragonese *jota;* and that one has certainly seen this or that dance done here and there in Spain far more superbly than here,

though I do not know where I have seen such variously delightful dancing of the arms as that of Marie Dalbaicin.

Yet it is no doubt true that there is for our northern minds something exotic in this dancing, not easily to be seen and accepted. (I do not refer here to the footless man in the troupe, Mate el sin pies, once a bull-fighter, who can execute a most vigorous dance, but since I first saw him is no longer allowed to dance, and now looks, as one hardly felt that before he looked, a pathetic figure, seated in his corner. How can one but feel some contempt for this British public which so gleefully sent its best young men, its husbands and its sons, to be mutilated, and yet is too squeamish to be shown how bravely and capably a mutilated man can face life?) One realises how exotic it is when one notes that even this enthusiastic public, these appreciative critics, cannot quite reconcile themselves to the Malagueña. Yet the Malagueña, with its peculiar melodic shape, its strange melancholy haunting almost harsh strain, is Spain, and not less Spain because it also seems, like Spain itself, to recall Africa.

Indeed all Spanish folk-dance and folk-song is Spain. It is the symbolism as nothing else is of the heights and depths of the Spanish soul, of the sweetness and the primitiveness of the Span-

ish people, — of the sweetness of life that is nearest to the bone, — of the tragedy of that adventurous and aspiring people that for one brief moment was supreme in the world and whose great achievements are still immortal. It was so that Spanish dancing seemed to me in the beginning, when I first learnt rapturously to know it, and so it still seems at the end when I may never see it again.

June 20. — They are covered with honour. Men treat them with respect, women fall in love with them, ribbons and medals are pinned on their coats, nations are ready to starve to provide them with lifelong pensions, they are encouraged — as we see this day — to form associations to demand for themselves all the best-paid posts in life and the dismissal of all others, women especially, now in employment.

And who are these heroes? They are the men, to whatever nation belonging, who were willing to be driven like sheep at the bidding of military imperialists in order to blast the world, who flung aside that personal responsibility which might be the divine prerogative of their species, cheerfully becoming machines to slaughter, loot, rape, and crush into nervous impotence every living thing within their reach, who have by their presence

killed the sweetness and fruitfulness of every spot of earth they have swarmed over, and therein destroyed every achievement of human skill that could be destroyed, who have come near to undoing all the effortful attainments of graciousness and civility the ages had slowly wrought, who have made all life, so far as their hands could touch it, on the side they fought for as much as on the side they fought against, something fouler than Dante ever fabled of Hell — these are the creatures, slaves of slaves, mere clay in the hands of phrasemongers, who are the Heroes of Man.

O Man, sublime in dreams, pitiful in real life, august in the creations of ideals, lower than an idiot in the face of the real world, O pitiful Man, leave the world alone to be lived in by those who know how to live; be content to dream.

But there is no one left to apostrophise Men nowadays. It would be too rhetorical, it would not suit the mealy-mouthed good breeding of our time. Like Agag we must go delicately, and meekly be hewn in pieces.

June 26. — After spending ten days at Margate — a place that for more than half a century I avoided and despised — admiring its delightfully variegated ancient topography, its invigor-

ating air, its amusing human population, its colour and light of a painteresque almost French quality matched or surpassed by an exquisite Dutch quality of its waters on still and sunny days, I have this morning for the first time gone down on the low-tide sands.

Suddenly it seems to me that Margate has receded into a dim distance and that the people scattered along the sands are as though they were not. I am in another world. I am in the world of Nature which has no name, I am in the world of dreams which has no shore. I tread again on the rippled sand; I gaze once more on the shallow pools with their brilliant everlasting play of living light; I inhale the ancient familiar odour of the olive-green seaweeds. Beautiful ghosts, who yet for me are never dead, stir with still more vivid life within my heart. And all these days I never knew that it was but a step from the Esplanade of Margate into the Ocean of Eternity and the World of Dreams.

July 3. — We are always putting back the origin of culture, we are always finding earlier and earlier in the history of the world peoples who were our equals and even our superiors in the arts, indeed also the artificialities, of life.

I realised that afresh during the wonderful

hours I spent to-day at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, revelling in the show of Egyptian things belonging for the most part to the earliest Dynasties.

The marvellous thing about Egyptian culture is that it had, so far as is yet known, no beginning. Where our knowledge of it begins, it had already far passed the stage of beginning. It was accomplished, exquisite, indeed mature. There hangs here the earliest known piece of dyed cloth, a fringed business-like sort of towel; if I heard it had just been made in Morocco I should not be surprised. It is the earliest known, it is many thousands of years old: yet what a long past of other thousands of years must lie behind so complicated and finished a product! That, no doubt, was among their ordinary manufactures. More wonderful are their rarer products, and I scarcely know whether to admire more the fine æsthetic sense they reveal or the triumphant artistic executive skill. It is true — and it is inevitable — that in later times men have turned their best æsthetic sense and executive skill to objects and to mediums which for the Egyptians were comparatively or altogether indifferent. But the things they cared to do — and they were quite difficult things — they succeeded in doing supremely well. To some extent that was even true of their finest

sculpture, for while it usually misses certain supple intimacies we have since grown accustomed to, it is unsurpassed in other qualities. In their familiar objects of daily life, as even the little cosmetic palettes following the outline of some natural object, nothing could be finer. Where they seem to be supreme, also, as supreme as in their pyramids and sphinxes, is in their jewelry, so delicate in its minute detail, so rich in its enamelled colour, so firmly impeccable in its workmanship, and with such a finely controlled sense of beauty. But on every hand there is something to note. I leave at last reluctantly.

The germs of our European civilisation were in their development modified, infused with new strains from other allied Mediterranean sources, so made more supple, more vitally alert, more vivacious, closer to fleeting human emotions, ever more nervously strung. But, I feel more assured than ever, it was these people of the Nile Valley, six thousand and more years ago, who, in their supreme creative originality and force, first planted the seeds.

July 8. — I have lately read Miss Romer Wilson's novel, *The Death of Society*, largely led to read it by the declaration of a good critic that it was the best novel of its kind since *Wuthering*

Heights. (Yet I knew what blind spots there often are in the eyes of good critics: it was a good critic who once thought that Stendhal wrote Casanova, and more recently a good critic who hazarded the opinion that H. G. Wells wrote Barbellion; and these opinions were not of the kind that might conceivably turn out to be true.) Since then Miss Wilson has received the Hawthornden Prize for the best imaginative work of the year by a writer under forty — an award I would say no word against. Since then, also, after an interval of, I suppose, at least forty years, I have re-read *Wuthering Heights.*

It seems to me unkind to Miss Wilson to measure her *Death of Society* against *Wuthering Heights.* Now that I have re-read Emily Brontë's book I see that there is no later book in its class that can profitably be compared to it except *The Story of an African Farm.* There are more inequalities and extravagances and crudities of art in *The African Farm* than in the sober unbroken harmony of *Wuthering Heights,* and this is more than the difference between the hard grey gloom of Yorkshire — though the light and waters of Yorkshire can sparkle — and the fierce brilliance of the Karroo, for "Ellis Bell" was two or three years older than "Ralph Iron," at an age when two or three

years make a great difference. On the other hand, there is in *The African Farm* an incomparable splendour of style, a poet's imagination, an audacity of thought, a flaming aspiration of social vision which were beyond the orbit of Emily Brontë's narrow and dark genius. They were alike in that each of them possessed masculine intellect in a feminine temperament, and that each embodied in her book the concentrated youthful passion of a solitary soul of the rarest intensity.

The Death of Society is no such unique revelation of a whole life. It is the second novel of a writer who may well produce a whole series of similarly good or better novels. It is, moreover, distinctly in the romantic manner, like the *Indiana* of the youthful George Sand, with which, indeed, it has one or two points in common, and such a comparison is no mean compliment. The title of Miss Romer Wilson's novel, which also is its vague refrain, is in the romantic manner, the manner of Ibsen when he is romantic and least successful, as in *The Lady from the Sea*, especially the manner of George Sand, who, however, always knew how to give that manner an eloquent precision. There is little precision in Romer Wilson, who is thus, in an unfavourable sense, more romantic than George

Sand. The least romantic figure in her book — and to my sense the best — is the heroine's old husband who really persuades us that he may be, as he claims, the rugged rough-mannered eminent critic, the friend of Ibsen and the rival of Brandes. The heroine arouses much less interest, even less sympathy, than her gruff husband. One cannot see why the chance Englishman who has tumbled out of the Great War into this remote district of Norway should become so enamoured of this quiet stolid middle-aged woman with a grown-up daughter, when he cannot exchange two words with her, so that she remains a complete stranger to him. But one recognises that ignorance is an essential part of the glamour — to use the conventional and proper word — of romance. It is an incalculable quality. No doubt it will be dissipated as soon as the Englishman has returned to Piccadilly. Romance, too, spreads its wings far, but they are vague. Miss Wilson refers to "Weissman" and "Romain Roland" and the "Divine Comedia." One feels sure that she cannot have meant to spell them all wrong. Yet one also feels that there is a certain harmonious rightness in her doing so. It is all part of the romantic spirit, which lies in seeking after a beauty the world cannot hold and in failing to see the beauty it really holds.

Wuthering Heights is another matter. Its framework is a crude artifice. We have to accept as the narrator a servant woman and to believe that a servant in her talk will use such academic dictionary words as "diurnal." Certainly it, too, might well be called romantic. But this is romance kneaded by hands so strong that it emerges as realism. Zola made a great parade of his scientific regard for heredity and environment. Emily Brontë may scarcely have been aware of their abstract existence. But beside the realism of her truth to the facts of heredity and environment, Zola is theatrical and empty. Heathcliff is Emily Brontë's supreme human creation. To call him a "ghoul" and to "scarcely think it is right or advisable to create beings like Heathcliff" was contemptibly unworthy of Charlotte's insight. It is Emily's greatness that she knew better. Inevitably moulded, before birth and after birth, into a morbid and perverse shape, Heathcliff yet remains of the stuff of human nature, even in its most concentrated essence. He carries the passion of love beyond death to its ultimate extravagance. And by what mystery his creator divined the power of such passion, and how she learnt to express its extravagance without extravagance, without violence, yet so firmly, so decisively, so truly, remains Emily Brontë's little secret.

July 30. — When I wrote to a friend that I was purposing to fly across to Paris, on the way to Blois, because, not yet being fully assured of restored health and strength, I wished to avoid the fatiguing and crowded journey by rail and water with the delaying night in Paris, he replied that I reminded him of a distinguished old French lady he had heard of who vaulted over a gate because, as she explained to her astonished granddaughter, she was unable, on account of age and infirmities, to open it. When my friend hears the issue of this flight, he will derive some malicious amusement from the story, and be confirmed as well in his own conservative routine of travel. I shall not agree with him.

Certainly nothing could be more easy and pleasant and peaceful than the first part of the voyage; even the deafening roar of the engine soon becomes soothing by the very monotony of its rhythm. These large Goliath-Farman planes hold twelve passengers, and with a minimum of the troublesome official preliminaries nowadays inflicted on passengers I leisurely stroll aboard with the dear little French friend who accompanies me; La Douce takes a seat immediately behind the French pilot, and I to starboard, while all the other places are soon filled by Americans, altogether eight men and four women.

One of the Americans, an officer in the army in France, had crossed nine times before by this same Compagnie des Grands Express Aériens. The rest were all, I think, like us, novices.

It was a deliciously novel experience to embark for the Continent in a quiet field by merely taking one's place in a chair. And then one rose so almost imperceptibly, one glided so smoothly through the air, without even being conscious of movement, borne by invisibly swift propellers over the delicate remote earth with its little white lines of road, and over the faintly rippled sea that looked almost solid, as though it were a sea of molten metal, that it seemed no mode of travel could be so simple, so swift, so delightful. I thought of Leonardo who, first of modern men, began to devise this method of travel, and wished he were with us — we were on our way to visit his last home at Amboise — and I thought wistfully of another who always took such joy in swift movement and would have loved so much thus to fly over earth and sea.

But after we had crossed the Channel and passed Boulogne a change occurred. To us, ignorant of aviation, it was but slowly — though we were next to the pilot and his mechanician, who kept us informed of our position and height — that this became realisable. We had encoun-

tered a fierce wind, and against it little progress was possible. The atmospheric processes were, indeed, of the rarest kind. Next day we read much in the papers of that devastating wind through the cloudless sky. It was described as a sirocco from the south, and that day, the 28th, was the hottest ever recorded in Paris. I had fixed the event of this flight, weeks before, to suit La Douce's convenience, not knowing that it had been fixed from the beginning of the world for a great atmospheric event.

There was no escaping the wind. We flew up to over nine thousand feet; we flew very low: all in vain. But our machine began to be buffeted by the gale; it rolled and bumped. Most of my fellow-passengers were air-sick; the pilot himself, for the first time in all his experience, was sick, though he stuck manfully to the wheel with the mechanician's aid; as the number of utensils for so unusual an emergency was limited, the pure ether of heaven became unpleasantly tainted, and I, too old a sailor to succumb, began at last to grow faint and tired. But whatever the height, I never felt dizzy, I never lost the sense of complete security; the air seemed firmer than the calmest sea; one began to understand birds. As I sat in my chair my eyes would be fascinated by the circle of little pistons just outside the win-

dow, for there was something ferocious and yet almost human in the untiring energy and speed with which they worked in and out; they seemed a living incarnation of unshakable Fidelity.

Four hours had gone by — much more than the normal time of the whole journey — and our petrol was exhausted. The pilot had almost landed near Abbéville, but thought better of this, and it was between Amiens and Beauvais, in a duly appointed field a few miles from the little town of Poix, that we gently came to earth, hoping that in an hour or two, by the time petrol was secured, the wind would moderate and we might complete the voyage. But the majority of our washed-out and dishevelled fellow-passengers had not the least desire to complete it. They succeeded in securing a car that by a lucky chance was passing and speedily disappeared, thoughtfully bequeathing to the rest of us a luncheon basket which kept us alive during the remaining five hours we were destined to linger on that field. Three young Americans remained; I was determined, perhaps by the sailor's ancestral spirit, to stick by the ship and see this adventure to the end, and La Douce, the only woman left, needed no persuasion to be of the same mind, for she was delighted with everything. She had, indeed, been ill, but with her

high French spirit she rose to the occasion and interpreted for the pilot to the Americans, who knew little French, the progress of the situation as it developed; he congratulated her on her "esprit sportif," for he knew that none of the other women would ever fly again.

But in a few hours an official message reached Poix from Paris to stop all flying; no planes completed their course that day. We were at last conveyed to Poix in the petrol lorry and received into a ramshackle country hotel where the banging of doors and shutters in the gale all night made sleep impossible. Next morning the official prohibition was maintained. So nothing was left but to bid farewell to M. Gaston, our pilot, and make our way to Beauvais in a little Ford car we found at the hotel. There we lunched in the large dining-room of the Hôtel Continental, familiar to me from of old, looked into the loftiest of cathedrals, took train for Paris, and so towards midnight reached Blois, where, in the rooms engaged by La Douce's brother patiently awaiting us, we at last found rest. It was thirty hours later than we had timed it, and the scheme to avoid trouble and save time had proved a dream. Yet we had achieved an adventure we should have been sorry indeed to miss.

August 9. — We have been spending ten warm and sunny days by the rivers of Touraine, with Blois and Amboise and Chinon as the successive centres from which to make delightful excursions or to linger in lazily with no desire to wander afield. It is an expedition I had planned from of old, for — except for a few days once at Tours — I have never stayed in Touraine, often as I have passed through it, while La Douce, French as she is, has never been so far south, and intelligent as she is, has not gathered from the *Contes Drolatiques* of Touraine any skill to recognise a vineyard when for the first time she sees one, so that these days have been full of joyous surprises in a joyous land, and we have both alike savoured the pleasant inns on banks of Loire and Vienne and the pleasant local white wines they give us to drink — these agreeable people who speak such excellent French in this heart of France — and the superb châteaux which are the jewels of French secular architecture.

When I was at Tours ten years ago I went to none of these châteaux; I was reserving them, as I explained to my protesting landlord (without knowing how wise I was), for a later visit. So now I have had an orgy of châteaux. We could not go to all, even of the most famous, and two even of those we went to, Chambord and

Cheverny, were tedious. But there remain Blois and Chaumont and Amboise and Chinon, and, above all, Chenonceaux and Azay-le-Rideau. There is a harmony that holds them altogether; they all spring spontaneously out of the French architectural genius, for the most part within the space of a century, and all within this one central province of France, though I would put Chantilly in the same group. Yet such various notes go to make up that harmony! Blois is the most complex and manifold and elaborate; one rightly sees it first because it is the key to them all, and one might well also see it last because its spiral staircase is the climax of their loveliness. But Chinon and Amboise stand fiercely on their barren heights and Chenonceaux or Azay-le-Rideau softly and smoothly in their luxuriant lowland gardens with gentle rivers flowing along their bases, and Chaumont on its cliff gazing dreamily across the wide Loire combines the one with the other. Between them is woven all the genius of France, from Joan of Arc at rugged Chinon to Rousseau and George Sand at gracious Chenonceaux, the chivalry and the saintliness, the ferocity and the sweetness, kings and their queens and their mistresses, heroes and fanatics and artists. Here, as nowhere else in France, it is all summed up, all brought to a luminous and exquisite point.

As I turn over the leaves of memory, page after delicious page, a page here, and there a page, a few, it seems to me, will long recur in whatever years are to come. Among these, and yet perhaps not oftener than others I name not, I think of the serene evenings of Amboise richly tinting the broad Loire with crimson sunset tones, and imagine how the dying Leonardo, whose mortal remains now lie in some unknown spot on the heights, could not but have gazed curiously on that transformation of dying light; I think of Chenonceaux, where Mary of Scots spent her honeymoon with Francis II, and the simple delightful little triangular room over a buttress of the bridge — they call it Catharine de' Medici's library — which it would be so pleasant to call one's own; I think of those small mediæval houses like castles in the old streets of Chinon where one never grows tired of wandering and of my delight when I saw framed, in one of the upper rooms of a *tourelle*, a solemn cat or a beautiful old woman, just as they had been seen framed there from of old by Rabelais whose house they still point to close to where we dwelt; and I shall still hear the strange exhilarating song wherewith a band of young men awakened me as they cheerfully strolled by the Boule d'Or after a prolonged little local fête. Such fragile pages,

and we turn them over with those we love, and of them and the like of them the real book of our lives is made.

August 27. — I notice to-day that a reviewer in our most seriously thoughtful journal, discussing the architecture of the society of the future, incidentally remarks that "Mr. Havelock Ellis invests Birth Control with the guardianship of Civilisation." I picture myself, as evidently I exist in this writer's mind, solemnly investing an incarnated Birth Control — not, let us hope, too obscenely incarnated — with the sacred insignia, condoms or pessaries or whatever they may be, of that exalted guardianship. It is an amusing picture. Yet I scarcely recognise its validity.

The Houses of Parliament on the banks of the Thames are, I believe, built of magnesian limestone, a stone on which the poisonous London atmosphere exerts its ever-corrosive action, so that a continual effort of repair is required. If at the time when the Houses of Parliament were built, some intelligent critic had insisted in pointing out to the builders the desirability, the absolute necessity, if a strong and resistant building was to be set up, of choosing a better material, he would not have been usurping the place of the

architect, he would merely have been asserting a reasonable condition of good architecture.

Anyone who insists on the desirability, the absolute necessity, if a sound future race is to arise, of care and choice in the control and breeding of men is not investing anything with "the guardianship of civilisation," or assuming the function of architect of society. He is merely asserting an elementary condition which must without fail be fulfilled if any worthy civilisation, any sound society, is ultimately to arise.

September 5. — "And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us."

Jesus has been called, I believe, the greatest master of irony who ever lived, and surely there can never have been a greater triumph of irony than the statement so gently insinuated into this petition, and now perpetually repeated by millions, even during the Great War. Millions, who genuinely believed that the Germans had "trespassed" against them, and were still more genuinely occupied in torturing, starving, murdering, and speaking ill of those trespassers, in the intervals of these occupations meekly mumbled in all our churches, as they echoed the brazen voices of their governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters: "And forgive us our tres-

passes, As we forgive them that trespass against us."

We have no Jesus now, nor any Rabelais, to do justice to these wonderful fellow-countrymen of ours, and their dear brethren in other belligerent lands of the War. Besides, it must be a painful subject. It cannot be pleasant for them to realise that, when they reach that next world they so devoutly believe in, the rest of Eternity will have to be spent in the enjoyment of that "forgiveness" they so liberally bestowed on the Germans.

I am more concerned to know what is wrong with a petition which has long been accepted without protest. And that surely is that the petition is reversed, in the Oriental manner, and that when set right end up it has really a beautiful and helpful meaning. I suppose that "God," to whom the petition is addressed, is the name for one's own highest self, since it is evident that no legitimate prayer can ever be answered except one's own best self consents to the answer. To ask that one's own higher self should forgive one's own trespasses is the hardest prayer to answer that we can ever offer up. If we can breathe this prayer, and find it truly answered in a harmony of exalted comprehension and acceptance, then we have learnt what forgiveness is. There is no other way to learn forgiveness. We

cannot forgive others in any comprehensible sense unless we have first learnt how to forgive ourselves. So this petition should read: And may we forgive those who trespass against us, As we forgive our own trespasses.

September 17. — On Saturdays the human stream runs along these streets more copiously and rapidly even than usual, each little drop separate and distinct from the others, though so close, each one, cheerful or sad or dull, bent on its own mission, carrying its market-basket for the most part or the net bag stuffed with potatoes and cabbages and all sorts of things to cook, I, among the rest, intent also on my own business. So the stream runs with its rhythmic systole and diastole of day and night. Every day separate drops are falling out of the stream, each drop to be quietly soaked up in its little hole of earth, but none misses them or marks any difference, as I also one day shall drop out and none miss me, or mark any difference, for the stream rolls on unchangingly. When it began, thousands of years ago, a little trickle then, no one knows; no one knows, perhaps still longer thousands of years hence, when it will cease to flow. As it flows, I hear, against a background of rumbling traffic, the sharp cries of street-vendors and the raucous

voices of singers on the kerb with the rough notes of their instruments, and while my outer ears are thus assailed, there reigns within a deep and lovely silence, and then perhaps there sounds the faint haunting cadence of the flute of Morocco and the chant of a boy in Savoy heard twenty years ago or over as they fell on the delighted ear of one by my side who will never hear them more, and the meaningless turmoil of the moment falls silent before the things which come out of the past and are incorporated with the texture of my own soul.

So it is that, amid the fleeting procession of the evanescent stream of life that washes across me and leaves no trace, I know nothing better than to weave a net for my dreams. My dreams, too, are of that procession, and they, too, come and in a moment they are gone. In the subtle net I weave they are caught and become a living part of my eternal delight. I, too, in my own way follow the call that of old led the fishers of Galilee to leave their earthly nets and to become, not, as they thought to be, fishers of mortal men, but the fishers of immortal dreams.

October 13. — I was wandering to-day about Kew Gardens in the warm sunny air of October days that this year are a perpetual miracle, wan-

dering about to gaze at random at the endlessly variegated and fantastically extravagant plants brought together here from the ends of the earth.

Every plant is absurd. It is even more plain to see, since one is oneself an animal, that every animal is absurd. Moreover, in its absurdity is demonstrated its rationality, for by its absurdity it lives. Every plant, every animal, is, from an evolutionary point of view, a caricature of the genus it has, on reasonable grounds, departed from, while yet retaining to it a recognisable resemblance. Man is the supreme absurdity because he is so poignantly aware of these recognisable resemblances to the other animals of his Family Group. He has to spend most of his life in training himself to try not to recognise them; and civilisation is Man's hopeless effort to cover up and conceal those traits of himself which he regards as specially animal-like. At some moments, when his antics become peculiarly wild, as during the Great War and after, he seems dimly to perceive his own absurdity, but those moments are rare.

Thus Absurdity and Reason are inextricably intertwined into the structure of what we call Life, while yet remaining eternally distinct, and each only to be clearly seen while the other remains dim or unseen. So there arises a problem

for everyone who desires to see the world truly and to see it whole. That involves the harmonisation of two discordant attitudes, for he who takes up one alone of these attitudes, whichever it may be, remains only half a human being. If he is only able to enjoy the absurdity of the world as a Spectacle, or if he is merely occupied in solemnly striving to mould and cement it by Reason, he is, in either case, a good half-man, but only a half-man. How to be at the same time both? I have always been preoccupied with this problem. For only the rarest great spirits have achieved it, Rabelais, Goethe, possibly Shakespeare had he lived longer. To be the serene spectator of the Absurdity of the world, to be at the same time the strenuous worker in the Rationalisation of the world — that is the function of the complete Man. But it remains a very difficult task, the supreme task in the Art of Living.

October 17. — The way you make the creature if you are God — or whatever one may choose to call It — is as follows: After well mixing, stirring, and chopping up, you form a tube of two layers of cells and allow them to adhere to each other to form a third. So you have a sack for absorbing food from the circumambient water or air — being careful to leave one or two little holes —

and for thereby growing; all the rest follows in time; the outer layer puts forth a sensory and motor nervous system to aid in the nourishing process, and the whole sack puts forth four limbs which gradually elongate and enable the sack to push itself towards the most attractive food streams. Then you place it on its two hind-limbs so that it may swing from one on to the other and so be able to move more rapidly towards its food, as well as to seek after or run away from its fellow-creatures, and generally to debase the face of the earth and destroy all other living things, animal or vegetable, while its two fore-limbs may be used to grab its food and to embrace or to kill its fellows, but both embracing and killing are of less urgent and constant importance to the creature than the work of placing all sorts of foods and drinks within that voluminous tube which is its primary central self and converting them, by a never-ending process which is the fundamental business of its life, into excretions, a process of such supremely sacred importance that the creatures rarely perform its final phase in public and there is nothing they speak of less, so that even around their kings and queens at banquets, in the days when kings and queens were great, at the moments when the final acts of digestion were accomplished a screen was placed to conceal the

dazzling splendour of that vision. The incidental by-play of this central function ran into the strangest directions. The curiosity of these beings reached even to the stars and the world itself could not always fill their hearts. Nothing was so small or so large, so common or so fantastic, as not sometimes to seem worth while to them. That is why this afternoon I see around me, close packed and wrapped in the most variegated rags, a great concourse of these beings, assembled in a hall to listen to one of themselves, one Chaliapin, as he sings the songs which once were the howls of lust and pain and joy in primitive forests.

Fiddling work to make men and women. And little credit to be had out of it. For they are attractive only to each other — when even that — but for all other creatures on earth a terror save only those which are still in the first unhappy stage of ignorance concerning them and those that have long been enslaved to them. The creatures that stand close below them can only suffer and die from that contact. And the creatures that are to stand above them, and will some day in their turn crush them out, are not yet arrived. Meanwhile the God that made This Thing hides his shameful face and can nowhere be found.

November 12. — I sometimes think our modern minds hold so little, are such mere half-pint pots, that you can pour nothing fresh into them without first pouring something out. So many people — is it only when they are young? I do not know — cannot gain a fresh appreciation without losing their old appreciations. And they are constantly trying to thrust upon us this fact of their own unfortunate limitations. For instance, here is a man who has just discovered that Croce is a great critic. Well and good: it is true. But he thereupon expends all his energies in belittling Sainte-Beuve! The fine qualities of Sainte-Beuve — not only the most catholic of gourmets in the enjoyment of old literature, however imbecile when he approached his contemporaries, but within his limits the accomplished type of the critic — for him cease to exist because he has discovered the totally different fine qualities of Croce. The half-pint mug this critic attempts to dignify by calling it his skull can no longer hold a drop of Sainte-Beuve now that he has poured into it his admiration for Croce. The same thing is being illustrated every moment to-day in ten thousand different half-pint pots.

It is so remarkable that one is led to wonder, Has Man always been so tame and narrow and unadventurous? Here, for over two thousand

years, he has been treading the same little circle in the rounds of time, occupied in the same laborious old task, and each of his footprints, as he comes round to it again, seems a marvellous revelation, merely because a little dust had blown over it and his small brain had forgotten what it looked like last time: states, patriotisms, religions, greeds, wars, states, patriotisms, religions, greeds, wars, over and over again. Never anything really new and of all that is most nearly new nothing that can enlarge or glorify Man himself as a species or further his individual perfection, the process in which, as Socrates said, he could alone attain happiness. It seems to have been not for nothing that Early Man possessed so capacious a skull. All the great discoveries, the great inventions, the great revelations, even the beginning of the sciences on which we chiefly pride ourselves — though they mean so little — all were due to Early Man. Clothing and fire and cooking and tools and the metals and pastoralism and agriculture and town-planning, with the sublime ideas on which he has been spiritually living ever since, all were achieved by Early Man. In his days, it may well have been a joy to live, though the exhilaration of it had ample time to evaporate in ages that were so spacious. There has been nothing left for modern man,

these thousands of years, but just to tramp round in the same familiar circle, states, patriotisms, religions, greeds, wars, mere by-products, all of them, of the great adventures of Early Man. — And the wretched little beast has grown so complacent over it all!

December 20. — "One of the most obvious characteristics of the Chinese," I find Bertrand Russell saying this week, "is their love of fireworks. On arriving at a Chinese temple, the worshipper is given a set of Chinese crackers to explode on the temple steps, so as to put him in a good humour. When I invited the most intellectual young students to an evening party, they sent several days ahead extraordinarily elaborate *feux d'artifice* to be let off in my courtyard. I did not find any Chinaman, however grave, who failed to enjoy these occasions."

Now this interests me. For some time past, in exploring the works of Bergson, who is, I suppose, one of the most conspicuous and popular philosophers of modern times, I have noted how fireworks play all through them. It is an image that he is always invoking: even allied images constantly tend to appear: phosphorescence, luminous cores, the flickering of half-extinguished lamps, kaleidoscopes, cinematographs — all these

things in their sparkling coruscating streams express for Bergson the movement of human experience or the process of human knowledge. But it is especially — and most so in *L'Évolution Créatrice* — on fireworks that he dwells. He would have us see the world as "quelque chose comme le chemin que se fraye la dernière fusée du feu d'artifice parmi les débris qui retombent des fusées éteintes," and consciousness itself as "la fusée dont les débris éteintes retombent en matière"; and even the famous *élan vital* is defined as essentially an effort to accumulate energy in a cylinder from the end of which it is discharged in infinitely varied play: why not say a rocket? The best preparation for the comprehension of Bergson's philosophy might, it seems, be a course of lessons on pyrotechnics, of which the last might take as its text the words of Bartoli, who is not a Bergsonian, but mainly concerned with cosmic phenomena: "God is the Great Pyrotechnist of the Universe."

At the core of every philosopher's heart, it may well be, there lies some simple clue which, when we have found it, may guide us through the maze of his work. That was long ago pointed out in detail by Alexander Fraser. Vision is the key to the philosophies of Berkeley and Hume, and to a less degree those of Hobbes and Locke; Hegel was obsessed by electricity, and so on.

Now the way is clear to accept Bergson as in the same great tradition. We see, moreover, that the ancient people now enthusiastically acclaimed as the deepest philosophers, the most exquisite lovers of beauty, the wisest artists in life the world has ever known, are above all peoples the amateurs of fireworks. So that if Bergson has spent his life in gravely exploding crackers on the temple steps he is in the end justified, and the devotees of this much-debated philosophy of fireworks may henceforth worship in peace.

December 21. — Week after week, week after week, there is nothing to jar the placid routine of life in this remote spot. In front is always the sea and the deep continuous murmur of its surge, now and then lashed into a roar by the wind which then, too, mingles its shriek in the music, and at night, in the trees behind, sometimes the soft and comforting tu-whoo of the owl. In the evening one sits on the little verandah and looks down on the valley below as it opens to the cove; and the sprinkled little cottages, as twilight falls, one by one show forth the softly gleaming lights of their windows through the gloom, gentle reassuring lighthouses, while behind the heights on the right, a mile afar, the real Lizard Light slowly revolves its great solemn flame to sweep

across the sky and search the sea beneficently for those who need illumination upon the dangerous track.

I have never lived so near that light before. But all my life, it almost seems, the Lizard Light has formed part of the familiar background of my mind. As a child I knew it for the last southerly point of England which one sadly left behind to flicker out as one plunged into the broad Atlantic. Again, years later, still on the threshold of the world, in days that were full of great and tremulous hopes, from the attic window of my room at Lamorna, for me a hallowed spot such as Rousseau desired to surround with a balustrade of gold, I could see afar the sweet and inspiring gleam of the Lizard Light. Now, at last, when I please myself with thinking that life is over, for the first time I dwell close beside it.

A lighthouse is one of the most beautiful things of man's creation on land, and so worthy to mate with a ship, which is one of the most beautiful things anywhere. At all events they were so once. In later times men have had less care to see to it that beautiful things should really seem beautiful. When one has seen the modern Lizard Lighthouse one has no special wish to give it a second glance. But see Smeaton's old Eddystone Lighthouse, reërected on Plymouth Hoe,

and the one lovely thing in that town, a finely wrought dream with its exquisite curves and its delicate lantern.

The lighthouse is still a beautiful symbol as it once was a beautiful reality. It stands for the supreme function of Man on earth, and of each one of us within the radius of his own small circle. To transform the spirit of love into light that shall illuminate the night of life for those who pass darkly through it — that is the function of the lighthouse, and the humblest human glow-worm who is merely true to himself is instinctively doing just that.

So as I watch the little casements in the valley below grow bright, and as the huge beam of the Lizard revolves behind the heights, I softly repeat to myself those words of Coleridge's which so often linger in my mind, as once in the mind of one who is no longer near me seeking to embody them: "I am not fit for public life, yet the light shall stream to a far distance from the taper in my cottage window."

December 22. — Here I have been finding time to read a few volumes of the *Historiettes* of Tallemant des Réaux, which I began to read long ago — at the time, it chanced, when Remy de Gourmont was doing the same, no doubt for his

Collection des Plus Belles Pages, for he sent me just then a note or two from Tallemant on points that seemed to him to concern me — but I had to put the *Historiettes* aside.

It is a work well worth reading. The seventeenth century is the Great Age of France on its most classic and virile side, the age of intellect and energy and passion, the age when Catholics and Huguenots could still jostle each other fiercely as equals until the final Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which seemed to emasculate the virility of France, even although it opened the way for the Great Age of France on the more feminine side, the new century that was initiated on the literary side by the exquisite and sensitive genius of Marivaud, for one can only marvel contemptuously at those obtuse critics who still babble of "Marivaudage," being unable to distinguish the new delicacy of sentiment he brought into France — as in a slighter degree his equally distinguished contemporary Congreve in England — from affectation and mannerism.

Thus Tallemant's age was at once a time of climax and of transition, — the climax of one side of the French genius, the transition to another totally different yet equally wonderful aspect of that genius, — and it has the fascination, the curious self-consciousness, which belong to such

an age of transition. There are many indeed who feel that the seventeenth century in France is the most complete manifestation of the French spirit, if it is possible to speak so definitely of a spirit which has so many and such diverse sides.

Tallemant des Réaux resembled Aubrey who was at the same time doing in England what he was doing in France, and in exactly the same manner, though on a smaller and rather humbler scale. But I cannot help comparing Tallemant des Réaux with Pepys who was also writing at about the same time and in the like spirit of frank and intimate revelation. They are even of the same class in their manner of writing and their success in a kind where success is rare indeed. Pepys has that same careless felicity, that instinctive power of touching the naked fact, by which in the end we learn to regard him as a supreme master. It is a rare gift and even a dangerous one; for of a thousand writers who are careless and instinctive, but one may possess it, and even he will most of the time flounder in unnecessary words. That, no doubt, was why it was so long before Stendhal was recognised as a supreme master, and one can well understand how Flaubert experienced so enormous a distaste for Stendhal. Flaubert and Stendhal stand at the opposing extremes of style, and that is why

there are so few who cherish a deep devotion to both writers and can never grow tired of reading either. There is, indeed, a difference between Tallemant and Pepys which goes beyond the fact that Tallemant was concerned with a more richly varied, a more robust, a more unrestrained society than Pepys was in England, where, I am almost inclined to say, the eighteenth century began rather earlier than in France, and it is a significant fact that Saint-Evremond, who was the precursor, half a century beforehand, of the spirit of the French eighteenth century, spent the greater part of his life congenially as an exile in London and had no wish to return to his own land. The difference I mean is that there are two sides to Pepys' *Diary;* on one side it is an unconscious psychological masterpiece of self-portraiture, and on the other side a picture of the age. In the *Diary* this latter side, fascinating and veracious as it is, incomparably above any other picture of that age, unsurpassed indeed as an intimate picture of any age, has turned out to be of secondary interest. But in Tallemant it is of primary importance and covers all the field, any self-portraiture being insignificant. Tallemant was of good birth, and he had travellèd; he had from youth moved familiarly among a vast crowd of the most famous and conspicuous

men and women of his day; he had the advantage of being in close touch with the Hôtel de Rambouillet, where ruled a spirit which was a protest against the spirit of the age, and so he was aided to see life from both sides; he was at the same time a great receptacle for scandal, he had a remarkable memory, and he was perpetually taking notes; his mind was veracious and impartial, though always ready to incline to the malicious side — his summaries of character are sometimes violently opposed to the official epitaphs — and with this he possessed a careless disordered pen that combined, from time to time with rare felicity, the plain direct frankness of the age that was passing away with the flexible facility and detail of the age that was approaching. It turned out to be a combination which, though it failed to produce a style that was harmoniously beautiful or personal, was yet admirably fitted for the great task which he accomplished. Here in this negligent and precise narrative — inaccurate, we may be sure in many details, unjust in many separate judgments, yet completely right in the whole picture — we have the final and perfect presentation of the Great Age of France. Here is its splendour, its colour, its insolence, its turbulence, its violence, its license, its easy indifference to cunning or lust or blood, audacious

and grotesque, its adventurous and dare-devil and imbecile men, its witty and outrageous and domineering women. All that world passes in procession before us in the *Historiettes* of Tallemant des Réaux, and, so far as I know, we may see it nowhere else so vividly.

December 23. — I have just been reading a long article on Amiel. It appears it was lately the centenary of that diarist's birth, so it is a commendable occasion for evoking his memory. But, to my judgment, the essayist rates him a little too highly, a little too nearly in accordance with Amiel's own estimate.

Even as I write there chances to come into my hands the December *Nouvelle Revue Française* which publishes some of the suppressed pages of Amiel's *Journal Intime*. (For it has only been a Bowdlerised version of the *Journal* that the world has yet known, in accordance with a lamentable human weakness which has spoilt for us the work of greater men than Amiel, for it is Man himself who, in his hypocritical way, has made the late Mr. Bowdler the scapegoat upon whose head to place a vice that is his own.) These fragments not only seem to indicate that Amiel's spiritual weakness was really also his physical nervous weakness, but they show him

to us as taking a most modest, indeed even unduly humble, view of his own personality: "Ni homme ni femme tout à fait, je suis demeuré amorphe, atone, agame, neutre, tiède et partagé. Pouah!"

It is a great many years since I read Amiel. He was little known then and had not been translated, as I believe he has since. If I remember aright, I was, in part, induced to read him by coming across an admiring essay by a new writer, a Mrs. Humphry Ward (the name is probably unknown to the present generation), whose later writings I never had any temptation to read; but in larger part, no doubt, by the essay on Amiel in those almost epoch-marking *Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine*, so precious to the youth of my generation who turned with repugnance from Bourget's later work. I read Amiel all through, with care, as in those days I always read books. Indeed, there was a certain interest in him from various points of view, and also a notable though minor gift, casual yet penetrating, of criticism. But the total impression he made on me was profoundly unsatisfactory; to my own mind he was alien, even a little contemptible, possibly a little repulsive. So he remains: a small man, without even the merit of being a typical representative of an age, a representative

only of a type, as such admirable, at the same time the representative of those people who seem to have been meant for religion (Tolstoy was another and far grander type of the same sort), yet who never reach that process of "conversion" — a process which is always outside the power of one's own will to attain — which brings complete harmony and serene union with the Universe. That for similarly dissatisfied and fastidious persons innately in conflict with the Universe he should be congenial and admirable I well conceive. But my own opinion, for whatever it may be worth, remains firm.

Amiel's *Journal* is one long and endlessly ingenious apology, in which he seeks to explain to himself why he has never made a figure in the world. He is convinced that he had it in him to be great. But he possesses such very lofty qualities, and they have held him back from stretching out his hand to grasp the success which was within his reach. A love of perfection, a disdain for all that is below the highest, a fine scrupulosity of conscience, an inexhaustible thirst for an unattainable God — all these beautiful qualities of his soul, and others of a like sort I can no longer recall, have been his ruin.

It was all a delusion. As a matter of fact he had tried his best to be all he could. He had put

forward his attempts to be a poet and a critic, without any scruples at all on account of their poverty. When at length he turned to self-analysis in his *Journal*, it was not a substitute for achievement, it was, on the contrary, the only achievement he had in him to make. And he made it to the uttermost, though we may question whether it was worth making. He squeezed into the fourteen thousand manuscript pages of his *Diary* every drop that was in him. He produced, for whatever it may be worth, the finest apology for spiritual impotence that has ever been written. It is no doubt a consoling book for people of the same kind who cannot themselves write. It is also a valuable psychological document.

December 26. — The splendid exuberance and extravagance of the Great Age of France would never have been adequately recorded if Tallemant des Réaux had not possessed the caustic daring pen that never hesitated to set down anything he had seen or heard, however outrageous, however scandalous, however obscene, though for the immediately following period we should still have the same kind of caustic pen, with a very firm feminine personality behind it, in the letters of Madame, the mother of the Regent.

There is no great age unless a man is alive with the genius to set it down in that spirit. To the Great Age of Louis XIV in France corresponds the Great Age of Elizabeth in England, and we are fortunate to possess a whole band of prolific dramatists who made it their task to transfer all the wild turbulence and humorous eccentricity and magnificent tragedy of that age into a fantastic and endlessly varied procession of figures across the stage. If it had not been for that gay and bloody spectacle, there would for us have been no age of great Elizabeth, merely the pale shadows of figure dimly deciphered from musty documents in the Record Office.

Since the seventeenth century there has, so far as is generally known, been no great age, and if there has, since there was no one with the spirit and the daring of Tallemant des Réaux, or of the followers of Shakespeare and Middleton, to record it, that age has gone with the last year's snows. In the nineteenth century literature withdrew into the withdrawing room, and whether there was any real life left is now matter for dispute. The atmosphere of primness and prudery is too thick to enable us easily to discern.

I was born into that age. It must have been by a wholesome and natural impulse that I swiftly reacted against the gods that in literature

it set up and worshipped. It is indeed inevitable that there should always be people who rebel against their own age. But that also has not invariably been altogether successful. One can well understand how fiercely Baudelaire resented those French writers of his time who, he declared, with the minds of barn-door fowls, gloated over excrement and called their depravity "le sel gaulois." One has seen something similar outside France. There are always among us the feeble folk who suppose they can escape from primness and prudery by cultivating baseness and triviality, not realising that they are thereby merely using the same old counters upside down. It is not by the ugly and vulgar side of those counters, any more than by the prim and prudish side, that the world can be created anew. It is only beauty that counts, and beauty can never be a mere counter because it is always eternally new. The great artist is for ever enlarging the scope of human art and embracing things with love that have never been known in art before. He can only do that by making them beautiful, and the would-be artist who brings into what he calls his art things that are ugly and remain just as ugly after he has touched them is nothing in the world. Man has travelled a long way through the ages, and there is no room in the treasuries

of his brain to store up any memories of his course that are not of beauty. As far back along our path as we look, there is nothing left standing which is not beautiful to see. All the experiences of the race are ever passing through a process of chemical transmutation. Look at Napoleon: think what a sinister, bloody, and devastating being he seemed to the men who lived near his age, and now, one of the most penetrating and fervidly critical minds of our own day, Élie Faure, finds that Napoleon is a great artist, the lyrical poet in real life, and worthy of a place among the supreme dreamers. That is typical of Man's dealings in so far as he is true to the human function. He is for ever crushing within his heart all the tragedy and the comedy of his long career, to express from them an essence of beauty, the everlasting fragrance and cordial that lures him up the stony path.

December 29. — Two or three years ago I found on a local bookstall a number of the earliest volumes of *Once a Week* which began in 1859. I carried away two, paying the few pence that were demanded, the next day two more, and finally all that were left. They have been to me a source of refreshment and delight ever since. A vanished age it seems to belong to, this exquisite

efflorescence of English art on wood. Who was the editor to reveal so fine a judgment I have no knowledge. In literature, also, his taste was admirable (the ignored George Meredith and the youthful unknown Swinburne, with George Borrow and others of only less renown, are here), but it is by the magnificent company of artists he here brought together that *Once a Week* will always remain memorable. They were not famous then, or it might not have been possible to shepherd them altogether, but nevertheless some of them, afterwards most famous, scarcely equalled their early achievements in the drawings on these pages. Millais, Poynter, Holman Hunt, Sandys, Frederick Shields, Simeon Solomon, Charles Keene, Tenniel, Du Maurier, Frederick Walker, Whistler — what a wonderful group! And the interesting point is that while they are in a manner harmonised by the uniformity of the medium of reproduction, they are far from forming a school; nearly every one of them is already in those days — sometimes indeed even more than in later days — an individual artist with his own temperament, his own vision, his own technique. Millais I would certainly put first, for he worked with a genius which later he dissipated. He is here the true interpreter of the beauty of the Victorian period. All the details of that life

— its formal conventions, the fittings of the houses, the garments of the men, above all its women with their vast crinolines and the quaint prim ways of doing their hair — are brought before us with a severe realism which becomes poetry because the artist has such distinguished taste, so fine and sure a hand, scarcely English, indeed, almost French, as Millais's origin might lead us to expect. The Victorian Age is here immortalised as the England of half a century earlier was immortalised by the genius of Rowlandson, who also was in his best moments both realist and poet, a wilder and more fantastic poet than Millais. Then there was Frederick Walker with a more limited and subdued force — realistic too, but more English he, with a touch of sentiment — who was for rural Victorian England what Millais was for middle-class urban England. And yet another world belongs to Charles Keene; with a rarer skill than any other purely English artist has ever brought to the delineation of vulgarity, without ever failing in distinction, he has presented the higher comedy, leaving to Leech, who is also here, the lower comedy, of Victorian plebeian life. There could be no greater contrast to all these than Sandys; he was a dreamer, a rare and solitary worker, who sought to embody in concrete vi-

sions the spirit of romance; music seems to float around his finest images, but of realism there is never a trace. Finally — to say nothing of the rest, individual as they all were — there was Whistler, already with all that finesse, that alluring fastidiousness, that eclectic echo of great masters of old, which marked his subsequent work in time. It is a large and incomparable group — for the others are only just below these and not always below — of variously and harmoniously endowed artists. If any other age or any other land ever brought together within the boards of one publication so glorious a company of contemporary artists, one would be indeed thankful to know of it.

It has long been a source of satisfaction to me that I was born in the year, not only of *The Origin of Species*, but of *Once a Week* and even, in a sense, within the sphere in which these artists worked. My earliest recollections are of one of the group who lived next door to my childhood's home in Cherry Orchard Road, the vision of a painter at work with palette and brush; I still recall the picture he was painting. It is true that in these early volumes of *Once a Week* I fail to find Robert Barnes. But he was one of the group, and while not one of the first in eminence he was perhaps the most prolific and with a recog-

nised and honourable place of his own. He presented to the small boy one of his best works, an illustrated edition of Mrs. Barbauld's beautiful *Hymns* in free verse, perhaps the earliest book I ever possessed, and mine still. I recall him as a thin, fair, consumptive young man, lately married but hardly expected to live, though he lived to a good age and brought up a large family and attained prosperity. He helped to illustrate many of the magazines of that time, and my childish perception of art found exercise in learning to recognise his hand instantly before catching sight of the "R.B." in the corner. It was not, however, highly individualised work, of a peaceful and graceful kind, the reflection of the more serenely happy aspect of Victorian domestic life.

I learnt later, through my friend Roden Noel, to know a more highly accredited member of the band, Frederick Shields. He was not indeed, in my estimate, a great artist, for he was tempted to undertake ambitious projects which were beyond his powers and scope. But he was in temperament a true artist and the type of what a Pre-Raphaelite might be expected to be. I recall his spiritual face, his feminine, almost caressing gesture as he led me by the arm into his studio, his high-pitched voice that was almost broken in moments of rapture when he talked of the great

things in art; there seemed in him then a touch of the ethereal spirit of a Shelley. He died long ago; they are all dead now. But in these drawings the Victorian Age will still live and for their sake it will seem worth remembering.

Some day, perhaps, our own Georgian Age will seem worth remembering. Heaven knows for what!

January 5, 1922. — As I read Tallemant des Réaux I perceive that the impression that is formed in me of the freedom and gaiety of life against the background of tragedy, the impression of boundless extravagance, of immense diversity, is in large part due not only to the narrator's power of presentation, but to the actual presence in that life of elements which to-day also exist in the world but are at once suppressed by our modern organisation of society.

I know that there were sadly and terribly petty influences on the life of seventeenth-century France, imposed by powerful institutions which, if not indeed society itself, were important sections of society. There was Puritanism in the world, as there always and everywhere has been, and it has always been ready to associate itself, unnecessarily, with hypocrisy and all that "cant" which was once foolishly supposed to

be peculiarly British, though it is common in France, and everywhere else, however its forms may vary. It was rampant, as we sometimes forget, even in the Great Age of France, this seventeenth century of Tallemant des Réaux. The Société du Saint-Sacrement was almost as powerful as the Inquisition in Spain. It even pursued Ninon de Lenclos, treating her as a common prostitute, and harshly even at that, though we cannot properly regard her as a prostitute at all (as is not always recognised by modern writers who have not asked themselves what they mean by the term); they were even able for a time to drive her out of Paris and shut her up in a convent from which only high influence retrieved her. And so, again, it was with Molière, who also was for a time an exile from Paris, and it was with difficulty, with the exercise of much precaution, that he avenged himself on his enemies with *Tartuffe*.

But I am thinking now, as I read the *Historiettes*, of an element of freedom in the social life of that age which was apart from Puritanism, due to the absence of a restraining influence which has since been rigid. Pepys recorded how in that same age an eminent Quaker was wont to come, unmolested, to Westminster, clad only in a loin cloth, to call the world to repentance. We do

not know how many souls he saved, but at least he added to the gaiety of those souls he failed to save. He harmed no one and he helped to variegate the world; for those who achieve that end we must always be endlessly grateful. But to-day that picturesque Quaker would be impossible, he would scarcely have taken a step before being carried off to Police Court and Lunatic Asylum, to his own misery, the anxiety of his friends, and the expense of the public.

As I read the narratives of Tallemant, I come from time to time on the picture of people who perform the most outrageous actions or lead the most fantastic lives, and Tallemant writes of them in as matter-of-fact a way as though he were Nature himself. He finds them of great interest, well worth setting down. But he never protests. The idea that they might with benefit be shut up in some prison or prison-like public institution never occurs to him. Of that place, so terrible in its social consequence, we call in England a Lunatic Asylum, he seems never to have heard. That is why the world he describes is often so uncomfortable and even dangerous a world; but that also is largely why it is so extravagant and so splendid.

In this matter Tallemant des Réaux is not peculiar. The world never knew the "lunatic,"

in the large and special sense in which we use that term, until the last century or two. As we understand the matter now, as soon as a man acts in a way rather different from the way in which the majority of people act, we call him "insane" — though we have not the faintest notion of what "insanity" is — and we feel so alarmed concerning the mischief he may do, though in fact he may be doing no mischief, and even be doing good, that we shut him up at once, without any idea of "curing" him, for that may clearly be beyond our limited powers, but simply to purge the world of his undesirable presence. It seems to me that we have never clearly realised all that this means and all that it involves.

There is, for instance — to take the example which often comes to me because I was able to follow it through many years — the case of Chidley in Australia. He was a remarkable man, peculiar, morbid, neurotic, without a shadow of doubt, but of original mind, of immense force of character, of ruthless sincerity. (His autobiography, still unpublished, is unsurpassed, for relentless self-revelation, among documents in this kind, and is possibly the most notable book that has yet come out of Australia.) He believed in simplicity of living and a fruit diet and sun-baths and sexual joy rendered sacred and ecstatic

by the discipline of rarity, and with these wholesome opinions he mingled more fantastic themes, for which, however, he found a certain scientific support. He was wont to go out like the seventeenth-century Quaker to call people to repentance, clothed in much the same sort of scanty garment, and with as burning a desire to save the world as any old martyr or apostle. The Sydney police were worried; they harassed him as much as possible; but he was guilty of no serious disturbance of public order and he quietly persisted. Then, at last, they had a splendid idea. They bethought them of the doctors; they haled Chidley before the alienists; and he was shut up in a Lunatic Asylum. He issued passionate protests, he had influential friends, for some time the issue wavered to and fro, but nevertheless it was in the Asylum that finally he died. There is no charge whatever to bring against either the police or the doctors. The Lunatic Asylum is a Government institution; they honestly followed, to the best of their ability, its usual rules as established by law. It is just because their action was so regular, so legal, so unimpeachable, that it is so ominous a portent.

Chidley was a man consumed by a passion for reforming modern society, and for a new religion of Nature. He was of the type of all the

men who have brought new ideals of life and feeling into the world. Without such men, who wave a flaming torch to stir the torpor of humanity and form on its path ahead a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, the world becomes a dreary wilderness. If the Lunatic Asylum as at present established had existed three thousand years ago, we may or may not have had Greece and Rome — it is doubtful — but we should certainly have had no Old Testament and no New. The Hebrew religion would have perished of anæmia and the Christian religion could never have been born. Nearly all the prophets of the Jews from Samuel on are patients for the alienists and candidates for the Asylum. Had there been a Lunatic Asylum in the suburbs of Jerusalem, Jesus Christ would infallibly have been shut up in it at the outset of his public career. That interview with Satan on a pinnacle of the Temple would alone have damned him, and everything that happened after could but have confirmed the diagnosis. The whole religious complexion of the modern world is due to the absence from Jerusalem of a Lunatic Asylum.

After Jesus the greatest revolutionary spiritual force in our world was Luther. He, who had once thrown his inkpot at the Devil in person, could scarcely have escaped the Asylum. The greatest

after him was Rousseau, the spiritual renovator of our world, and he was at times definitely insane. It happily chanced that these men lived before our modern conception of the "lunatic" was formulated and acted upon. They could never have lived in our world.

For, to-day, our world is a spiritually emasculated world. The Lunatic Asylum is an instrument for spiritual castration. It fails to grip the people, often highly placed, whose morbidity is really dangerous to society. For the rest, it seizes at random, among worst or best, those who are the refuse of society, and those who, while perhaps dangerous for themselves and a nuisance to those around them, may yet have it in them to be, for all we know, the benefactors of society, its reformers, its saints, its martyrs, even its gods.

In Paris, in what is now merely a large Place, there once stood a great fortress-prison called the Bastille. To it were consigned people whom society or the Government found troublesome to the conventional routine of law and order. Some of the greatest spirits of France, together with others less great and sometimes more genuinely insane, were at one time or another confined there, not to be medically treated — it can scarcely be said that the inmates of the modern analogues of that institution receive much treat-

ment — but to be suppressed, often quite benevolently and sometimes even desirably suppressed, for the Bastille was not so black as it has been painted. When the Bastille was destroyed, a great shout of joy went up, for it was thought that the human spirit had been at last liberated, and the anniversary of its fall is still the National Holiday of France. It was not realised that in its place other Bastilles would spring up all over the field of civilisation, and of yet more solid structure. So the old task of destroying Bastilles again presents itself to mankind. And either they will be destroyed or the soul of man will.[1]

[1] This statement may seem extreme, yet, two years later, in the London *Times* of 14 March, 1924, I find a letter, entitled "Tests of Lunacy," by one of the leading English authorities on insanity and asylums. He here makes the following remarks concerning insanity: "Conduct and speech are its most obvious and definite indications, and in the normal thinking man these are appropriate to the occasion; conduct which is tolerated and suitable for Whitechapel would be a strong indication of insanity in Mayfair. As high an authority upon the subject as has ever contributed to its elucidation — the late Dr. Mercier — taught students that insanity was a failure of adaptation to environment." In other words, the whole progress of civilisation — which is the effort to adapt the environment to Man instead of adapting Man to the environment — is "insanity"; and, further, the conduct of every representative of a high culture amid the differing environment of a lower culture — which he seeks not to adapt himself to but to adapt to himself — is "strong evidence of insanity." If in Europe Man had been content with what for this eminent alienist is "sanity" he would still be a savage adapting himself to the environment of a primeval forest; if individual men of high aspirations had been similarly "sane," no missionary of any lofty social or religious faith would ever have gone out into the world to raise

January 9. — Every morning as I lie in bed on the hillside of this valley over the sea, just as it grows light, a thrush begins to sing. I do not quite know where he is; he seems near, but I have never been able to see him, and though his song is sweet he has no pretensions to be among the great songsters, even seems aware that that is so and perfectly content. His song is very deliberate, varied, and I especially note how frequently the phrases fall into triplets, never, indeed, ending on triplets, always on single or double phrases, but the substance often in triplets, as indeed it frequently is among birds.

I am led on to reflect that it is not so only with the song of birds. The same unconscious tendency is also in Man. When, in a solitary mood of sad or tender memory, we murmur involuntarily some aching word or phrase or invoke some lost beloved name, it falls unconsciously into triplets. It is the number three which frames those movements of Man's which are deepest and most sacred and most significant. There are Three in the Deified Family, and the Trinity is the Christian symbol of God, while there is never anything holy or mysterious in the number two, but quite the reverse.

the moral level of humanity, nor any pioneer in art and science revealed new beauty and new knowledge. Were this letter written to the *Times* merely to illustrate the argument in the text it could not have been written more to the point.

Perhaps it may be that we feel that all the practical activities of the daily real world go by twos. It is by two eyes that we see the world and by two hands that we make use of it and by two legs that we move across it. Our whole life is a twofold alternation of day and night between the twofold doors of Life and Death. But as soon as we go beyond, as soon as we reach three, it is another matter. There is no longer any end. We are on the threshold of the Infinite. Three becomes our symbol of Eternity.

So now I begin to understand my thrush's song, and now I know why that little artist instinctively feels that while he may introduce the note of the Infinite into his song, he must always wind it round with life and bring it to end on earth.

January 12. — There had been a strong wind during the night and I sat at the end of the tiny green peninsula stretching out into this little bay which is almost open sea, and watched the endlessly fascinating rhythm of the waves that surge forward to break into clouds of fine spray against the rocks. What are they like?

I do not know what they are like. Nothing I can think of, even though I have, almost automatically, brought in the image of clouds, con-

veys the same exhilarating sense of mighty force and ethereal lightness. All the metaphors and similes degrade it or render it perversely fantastic. "It is like steam," said a friend who is a poet, to whom I mentioned my difficulty; but in a sense that is what it is, yet steam is a completely misleading word to use; "like smoke," he added. But it is only like smoke in the most superficial way, for smoke is apperceived quite differently; it has nothing of the delicacy and purity, the stimulating tactile and olfactory thrill, which the spray suggests, even when one is not actually experiencing its contact. The spectacle is itself; and it becomes less itself, and less full of enlarging pleasure to the soul, when one seeks to apply to it images that only degrade it in the hierarchical order of Nature.

In metaphorical poetry, indeed, we ought never to find the greater compared to the less, the superior to the inferior. We then only reach "Conceits," and are left frigid. It is a defect of Shakespeare's endlessly fresh and unfathomable sonnets, regarded as love-poems, that they frequently fall into this error, though it was not a common error of the Shakespearian age, and much commoner in the immediately succeeding period, when a new spiritual Orientation — more realistic, more precise, more physically in-

timate, the ideal of prose — was slowly being achieved. (At a yet later period it was much easier, we may significantly note, though for a different reason, for Shelley than for Keats to make love-poems, not because Keats was more prosaic, but because he felt things less in their visual values than Shelley, more in their precise tactile values, and that constitutes the most difficult aspect of love to render in poetry or to mate with adequate metaphors other than conceits.) It would be legitimate for a culicine poet to compare the flea of his adoration to a lioness, but a feline poet who compared the bounds of his lioness to those of a flea — even though these are really much more wonderful — would from the standpoint of feline æsthetics have fallen into a serious error. Herbert of Cherbury, amid the dreary conceits of his love poetry has one cry of exultant felicity:

> Have waves the curling of your hair?

But we cannot turn that about and adequately invoke hair when we are speaking of waves. We cannot find adequate similes for the breakers on the rocky coast even in the most fascinating phenomena of the human body, simply because we have here reached that farthermost limit beyond which no greater or higher object of com-

parison in that kind exists on our earth. There is nothing else that so easily displays so mighty a force and is at the same time of such ethereal and delicate lightness.

Yet we cannot avoid metaphor and all speech is full of it. Primitive man seems to have begun with metaphor. Each new thing that came before him he learnt to know and to name in terms of some better known thing. And poetry, which is a primitive mode of expression, seeks to create a new world and new names in precisely the same way. One has only to turn to Homer — who, however remote he may now seem from the primitive, began our European poetry — to see what a deliberately large part the metaphor and especially the simile play in his mind. He lived by the sea, he knew the sea well, according to tradition he was buried by it, and the sea is one of his frequent similes. But — whether by instinctive skill in art or merely because Nature was not then the primary subject of poetry — while he compares other things to the sea, he never compares the sea to other things, he happily avoids the error of comparing the greater to the less.

The poets of a more complex stage of civilisation adopt a rather different method. There often occur to my mind the words of Keats con-

cerning the "priestlike task of pure ablution," but, however right and beautiful that metaphor may be, it has gone beyond the primitive function of metaphor; it is not explaining the unknown by the known; it is adding subtlety to simplicity, and sanctification to the obvious.

Is it not clear that the metaphor and the simile, in their substantial sense, and though they are still archaistically used by the poet, really belong to the elementary stage of the human mind? We cannot taste the full beauty of any natural thing until we are sufficiently grown up to realise that it is only degraded, or at best perverted, by being compared to any other thing. We do not learn to understand it by placing it in a class to which it cannot truly be said to belong. We only grasp it through the intuition that it is unique.

January 18. — Among the men of to-day there are many who cherish, or at all events believe that they cherish, a profound antagonism to Beauty. They are repelled by it, they are suspicious of it, they have no impulse to seek after it. There is something else, they seem to feel, better worth admiring and seeking after.

Quite natural! I am tempted to exclaim. The generation that made the Great War was

trained up in Ugliness and it is natural that they should make Ugliness their God. One must respect their devotion. For my own part, I am inclined to say, I am well content that it should be so. If in this matter there is one thing I above all dislike, it is that the shrine at which I worship should be profaned by the hoofs of the herd.

But that would not only be too Pharisaic an attitude, as of old they would have termed it, but also too superficial. For those to-day who think they contemn Beauty are merely suffering — as so many do in our world — from the weakness of their muddled heads. It is not the things that are beautiful they are turning from; it is the things that have ceased to be beautiful. And that is a very different matter. In every age — it is nowhere seen more clearly illustrated than in the history of our own poetic literature during the past three centuries — convention and the usage of dull formality are ever wearing away what is beautiful in speech. In every age the pioneer is called upon to penetrate daringly into the unknown and capture new shapes of loveliness, even though in doing so he cannot fail often to bring back what is trivial, banal, extravagant, absurd. It has always been so. That is why Cowley is so significant a figure in our literature; however hidden his inestimable service may still

be to those who see only his failures, all the greatest of his immediate successors knew better. That again is why Wordsworth, whose mistakes, if less absurd, were much more tedious, has a place in literature that is also great even beyond his achievements. And to-day we need not be surprised if, in reaction against the immense Victorian popularity of the followers of Tennyson — who is not any the less on that account a supreme artist — there are those to-day who seek a new austerity and a new severity, even though they sometimes confuse it with what is merely bizarre or even repulsive. For Beauty is served even of those who know not her name.

For my own part, I am quite content that I have always worshipped consciously at that shrine. Beauty, when the vision is purged to see through the outer vesture, is Truth, and when we can pierce to the deepest core of it is found to be Love. This is a goddess whom I have worshipped sometimes in the unlikeliest places, perhaps even where none else saw her, and she has given wine to my brain, and oil to my heart, and wings to my feet over the stoniest path. No doubt the herd will trample down my shrine some day, yet still worshipping Beauty, even without knowing it.

But I shall no longer be there.

February 7. — When I look into Sadger's lately published *Lehre von den Geschlechtsverrirungen* — or indeed into almost any psychoanalytic book that is not English or American, but perhaps especially this of Sadger's, for it is so relentless and so precise — I seem to see a hand that is pointed towards an approaching new horizon of the human spirit. I am careful not to say that I see the new horizon itself. That only exists in my own mind, for these books are too pedestrian, too prosaic, too (as they used to say before "matter" was recognised as a poetic fiction) materialistic, for so large a gesture. Yet they really point the way towards the direction in which poets and prophets will raise the curtain that covers the new horizon. They are doing more, they are actually laying the foundations of the structure on which the poets and prophets will stand. They are even themselves revealing on one aspect the new vision of the human soul. For they are like the Hans Andersen child who saw that the Emperor had no clothes on. They have demonstrated the fact that Man, who fancied he had dressed himself in such fantastic disguising garments, has no clothes on, but remains a mass of primitively fundamental, even unconscious, human impulses, woven in and out of each other, as equals, no longer divided into some that

may be shown, being respectable, and others that must be concealed, suppressed, or aspersed with contempt, as though they had no right to existence. So the way is opened for a new vision of the soul, a new vision of the world, a new vision even of the human body, what would once have been called a new Gospel of Life. That is still some way ahead. The psychoanalysts are not themselves the people who can bring it. But glimpses were caught of it — as by Whitman — before they even existed.

Every spiritual darkness, they say, is darkest before dawn. It is sad, no doubt, that we of the last two centuries should, beyond all men, have lived in the age in which, above or below all others, the world could not be seen for what it is, and that all our literature and our art, and almost our science, is so choked and disguised in artificial and hypocritical garments that one sometimes wonders whether in future times anyone will ever think it worth looking at. It may seem hard. But what finer stimulus could there be to our courage? One sometimes feels that the substitution of the minor martyrdoms of modern times for the major martyrdoms of older days has not been altogether for the good of humanity. Of old it was from the flames that went up from the bodies of real martyrs burnt at

the stake that the dawn was first most clearly seen in the sky.

February 18. — "There are no voices, O Rhodope, which are not soon mute, however tuneful: there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the echo is not faint at last." I felt that long melodious sigh in my heart when I read in the papers of the death of a man I never met, though I often heard of him. He was known for his fine and useful and quiet work in the world. In my mind his name lingered tenderly because in one of his writings he once passingly described in appreciative happy words a certain beautiful voice and boyish laugh which to me was one of the most familiar dear things in the world. In that man's mind, at all events, I would say to myself, there still rings sympathetically the echo of a voice that may never again be heard. — But there is no voice of which the echo is not still at last.

It is well, I know, that it should be so, and the things that never die are only the things that never lived and never had the ravishing power over us that only belongs to the things that have once had life. If it were not so, life itself would grow intolerable with the memory of all the beauty it once held from creation day onwards

and the songs of all the voices that once sang, and we could not live in a world where still for ever that wild music burthened every bough. So let us not too sadly mourn that there is no voice "of which the echo is not faint at last."

March 12. — When, from amidst the ugly confusion and noise of London, the peaceful corner of Cornwall where I spent the winter comes back to my thoughts, it comes back nearly always in the symbol of a bird. I was told that the missel thrush flourishes there, but my bird I regard as the common thrush, though his song possessed a subtle individuality to which any merely specific name would be inadequate. Every morning, from the time of my arrival, he would begin to sing from the bough of a tree near my window over the sea, more than half an hour before sunrise, and his song was always the first articulated sound to be heard against the deep rhythmic reverberation of the ocean, for one can scarcely take into consideration the spasmodic occasional cries of the sea-gulls which may or may not arise at any hour of the night as of the day. The sea-gull is a bird for whose alert intelligence and practical energy and initiative I have profound admiration, but he is not an artist in song, scarcely more than the human baby, from whom

in the distance he sometimes seems to the ear barely distinguishable; he is an artist in flying and one never wearies of watching him, but his voice is not that of song, but perhaps of rudimentary speech, far from beautiful, but admitting of some inflection and seemingly calculated to be intelligible to other members of the species.

My bird was an artist. He was obviously not attempting to convey information, nor even to express definite emotion, beyond, possibly, the general joy of living. He was only concerned to sing, and into his singing he put what, if he were human, we should be compelled to regard as a high degree of deliberate artistic intelligence. His music was of vocal rather than instrumental type, a poet's music, and it fell, if one listened with due care, into lines and stanzas. He was a master in the use of intervals — the placing of the cæsura — though they were short, sometimes only just perceptible. The actual material of his song was of no high quality and it was that that made his art so impressive. He had open, as it were, vowel notes, rather piercing at close range, and he had more consonantal phrases. It was the endless slight variety, and the skilful intervals, within a rather narrow range, which made the song so fascinating, and so completely free from monotony, for one never seemed able

to catch quite the same stanza twice. To my ear the whole song fell into stanzas of five or six lines, with a varying number of phrases, from five or six to one, in a line, but always the same phrases in each line. The first line never had less than three phrases and often more; the penultimate line was usually of two phrases and the last nearly always of one only. Thus each stanza stood out as a whole, but a whole that was delicately and endlessly varied by what seemed to be deliberate art.

So all through the winter my little artist was making his songs with a serenity that was proof against rain and gales. The weather must be bad, indeed, when his song was disturbed. The owl who tuwhooed softly any night on the land side of the house never once came on the sea side which my bird found so congenial, whether it was that the wildness of Nature seemed to him a fitting background for his own subtle art, or that he was exerting by sympathetic magic the power of his hypnotic suggestion on Nature. For it was when the weather grew gentler that his song began to fail. Then it was only for a few moments that at dawn he came to sing one or two stanzas; but they never failed. During the earlier months I had wondered how he could find time for so much singing. With the early Cornish

spring he could find time no longer. In this soft air the domestic duties of bird-life perhaps begin early. But until my departure he never failed to sing one or two stanzas at dawn.[1]

April 20. — Now at last this slow keen March weather is melting into spring and a delicate sunny exhilaration, that is yet sharp, fills the air. To-day, even in a dingy and sordid London suburb, the sun after rain has a clear brightness which almost makes the South seem near. This sun shines in through my window on to the blue Delft pot of tulips, and their flame-coloured globes become so radiant at that tender touch, so full of serene enchanting life, that, instead of meditating on the Art of Life as I had set out to do, I can only lean back and gaze at them, to inhale the atmosphere of their beauty, until I begin to feel that my eyes may soon fill with happy tears, for these tulips are linked in memory with bowls of tulips from which I drank loveliness be-

[1] I was not at this time acquainted with Professor Hoffmann's *Führer durch unsere Vogelwelt*, which is, I suppose, by far the best book on bird-song, and Garstang's little book on *Songs of the Birds* was not yet published. Much that I have written is confirmed by Hoffmann who regards the song-thrush (though with prudent reservation!) as the Mozart or Haydn of the bird-world, while the closely related blackbird is much more modern in his methods, belonging to the same sort of school as, for instance, Debussy.

fore, in what different condition, in what remote years.

So I wander into the streets, to feel the sun, and to note how unfamiliarly and how southernly white the pavements have grown beneath it, and the streets themselves and all they contain have blossomed into gay colour, women and men and children scattered among the street stalls, buying vegetables and fruits and little pots of flowers, for, after all, these people who sometimes seem so alien to me are feeling precisely the same emotions that I feel. There comes back to me the memory of other market-scenes in other parts of the world, there flashes on me the vision of the little Mallorcan market square of Palma as it was at this mid-day hour, as it may be at this moment, deserted, indeed, with the stalls still there, and the girl who slept alone amid her market goods with limbs flung apart in the heat. "To travel is to die continually": I know it well, but such death is the portal of eternal life, and by it we enter the tradition of the world and garner up our own treasure-house of beauty.

The world, if we like to view it so, is fundamentally a very ugly place. If you like (of course you need not like) it is fundamentally — physically, metaphysically, spiritually, morally, socially, individually — as bad as possible. But

there is this about it. By facing this ugly world, by ranging wide enough in it, afar, and above, and below — in Nature or in one's fellows or in oneself — one can find beauty. Slowly, patiently, with the exercise of much skill, one can divine beauty in it, one can reveal beauty, one can transmute it into beauty, one can even create beauty. The number of points at which one has been able to do this is the measure of one's success in living.

So, after all, I have not wandered from the subject of my meditation. This is the Art of Life.

May 24. — As one's experience of life deepens, new aspects of it, that one scarcely glimpsed before, are always coming into clearer view. One such aspect, often impressed on me in recent years, is the closeness of the relationship between religion and love. I have long known it as a general fact — though I knew also that it is far from being the only fact to note when one speaks of religion — but now I seem to see part of the mechanism of it.

What we love and venerate always lives and can never die until we die. The mummied sacred cats of the ancient Egyptians, as Flinders Petrie finds them to-day, had little bowls of milk before them. It may have been merely a symbol, but of

a real fact of personal faith which may have gone far, far back into Palæolithic times.

It is not only that what we love lives; it also grows. And as it grows, it sheds all those elements that were accidental and not of its essence. So that when the object of love is no longer felt by the physical senses, but by the spiritual senses alone — that is to say, when it has entered the sphere of religion — it is for the first time truly felt. It is common for the "cynic" — as he is foolishly and ignorantly called — to comment on the devotion of the husband to the dead wife who seemed to make his life wretched or the worship of the mother for the son who had wounded her by careless indifference. There is ample room for psychological comment on such pitiful persons. Yet they are nearer to the truth of life than their critic. An element of pain is essential to life; and of love, supremely, pain is in the very texture. There is no need to invoke any morbid algolagnia to explain this. It is normal. "On n'aime que les choses et les gens qui vous font souffrir," wrote Flaubert profoundly to his friend, Mademoiselle Leroyer de Chantepie. We need not carry that truth beyond the normal limit, like Proust, who, applying to it the last refinements of elaborate analysis, would even make it appear that the whole content of love

is suffering. I find it hard to conceive any love worth the name, any love, that is, with some power of permanence, that has not sometimes been experienced as anguish. Yet even though anguish may be essential in creating the permanence of love, it is not under the form of Pain but of Joy that love assumes its immortal shape. So that however pitifully some have expressed this truth, we must still recognise that it remains truth. One is not least often deluded when one thinks one is detecting delusion.

I have always been apt to see that it is a mistake to regard love, except in its earliest and most youthful manifestations, as an illusion. In a notable and penetrating passage Proust has contrasted Saint-Loup's adoration for his commonplace mistress with his own clear-sighted vision of her, and we need not contest the reality of the contrast. Yet it remains true that there is none so clear-sighted as the lover who has passed through that early stage, and to that truth also Proust has borne witness. The lover is the most clairvoyant of beings. A thing that is loved is, in the long run, to no eye so clearly revealed in all its appalling defects as to the thing that absolutely loves it. The lover has the best guarantee of the fidelity of his vision. If he has seen there what ravishes him, he has also seen there what

tortures him. No doubt a large part of the fascination and the piquancy of love lies in this fantastic association, in one little person, of such a wild variety of qualities to worship and defects to damn.

It is by a continuation of this process — and so again no illusion — that we reach religion. One may smile, and it is reasonable to smile, at Comte's divinisation after her death of Clotilde de Vaux, who had scarcely been more than an acquaintance to him, at the most a rarely seen affectionate friend. It was a rather morbidly imaginative brain here at work. But, at all events, if we can scarcely count this a reality, Comte has furnished us with a neatly complete symbol of reality. It is but a farther step on the path of love. In memory the mind makes an instinctive unconscious selection from among the traits of the lost loved one, and the essential remains, the unessential falls away. The figure is carved afresh in large and simple outlines. It is not less truly seen, it is more truly seen, in that the roughness of surface, once so painful to contact, can no more be perceived or felt.

That is the path that ends in religion, and it is the path that Man may well have been treading ever since Palæolithic days.

June 1.—This is what used to be called the "Glorious First of June," I forget for the moment why, but I am sure it had something to do with fighting; there is nothing glorious in the mob's eyes but what has to do with fighting, *miles gloriosus* in a perverted sense. I am reminded of the day because I am again shocked, as of late I have so often had occasion to be, by the attitude of the generation of 1914 towards this "glorious" phenomenon. Again and again in our most esteemed popular journals I come upon slighting allusions to war — evidently aimed at the "Great War" — thrown out with a fine careless contempt for anything military.

Now, I ask myself, where were these people in 1914? I never heard of them. No one seems ever to have heard of them. They are too numerous to have all been hidden away in the deathly silence of some remote trenches of Peace. One cannot avoid the conclusion that they were themselves fighting, or kicking other people into the fighting line, or wildly rushing to the rear in search of "war work," and shouting patriotic songs and wagging national flags and writing to the papers — for I speak of writers, be it noted — to stimulate all the force of hate, to extol — no doubt often in innocent simple-minded credulity — the men on their own side, whichever that

may have been, as heroes, and the men on the other as dealers in "atrocities."

I have nothing to object. It has gone on for some thousands of years, possibly longer. It is what we have come to call "human nature." I only observe, mildly, that it might have been done a little less hysterically, a little more temperately; for even in the prolonged wars between England and France not much more than a century ago, the English and French people were still free to be friends, to admire each other, to visit each other's lands, and to leave to the military and political castes of their lands the business, or the pleasure, of fighting and making to fight, while long before that it was a famous English poet who sang of the "sweet enemy."

But what I do object to is that these creatures have been false to themselves. "Human nature," if you like, but if human nature is to be bestial nature, let it at all events be that of decent beasts. Why need the generation of 1914 proclaim to the world that their minds are moulded of such soft pap? It would be better to continue the march to hell like men. It is enough to have been traitors to all that is great and noble in Man. There is really no occasion to be renegades also from their own miserable selves.

June 8. — It seemed to me that Man, who in the Neolithic Age had discovered the uses of Corn and begun to make Bread, had not at first divined all the Eleusinian significance of that Mystery, but had in a later age sent Keats to the Earth in order to show that in the delight of the sensory physical things of the world is also to be found an exalted imaginative quality of the spirit, standing in the mere cornfield, a Ruth to announce higher things.

Then I awoke, in the middle of the night, just able to catch that receding dream, yet with a sense of blissful satisfaction, the feeling, it seemed, of joy that the possibilities of life were so much larger than I had supposed, and that Man was thus able to remain in direct touch with his children of genius so late.

I had just arrived to spend a few days by the sea; I had slipped, as I am often wont, a volume of Keats's *Letters* into my bag; and my landlady had mentioned that on the morrow there would be no bread, as the bakers were having a special celebration of their own. That sufficed to bring Keats's Ode into contact with recent thoughts of Eleusis, though the devout Freudian, no doubt, must needs feel that the plastic hand of a divine Libido was here at work.

June 16.—I never grow weary now of leaning over the fascinating edge of this Margate that I have learnt so late to relish. I often try to explain its complex fascination. True, Bergson would say that the more I try to explain, the farther away I am from "intuiting" the fact. Yet I cannot see why I may not be allowed to do both, though, I quite see why, not both at the same moment. But to-day I am too lazy to explain; I am content to "intuit" the scene of this crowd staged on the sands, of which I might perhaps be supposed the least congenial of spectators, this crowd of miscellaneous people who are occupied in raising mountains of sand, or playing at ball, or paddling in the dirty sea-water, or publicly cuddling their best girls, or reading the *Daily Mail* or licking twopenny ice-cornets — doing, indeed, all the things I would never do unless I were a good Catholic performing a penance — and perhaps scarcely one in a thousand of them aware that the background of this scene, the stretch of this coast and the coast opposite, is at rare moments of a loveliness so exquisite that Dutchmen and East Anglians have for three centuries spent their lives in struggling to grasp it in their hands, this vast crowd unconsciously making for that background a radiant and variegated foreground on the yellow sands

which, for one spectator at all events, when the ocean is calm and the sun shines, becomes a spectacle of unending exhilaration.

June 24. — I was reading the other day the narrative of the scientific man who spent the winter in a little Antarctic island among penguins. He found that there are among them, as among human beings, some of all sorts, even some of an anti-social — what we call "criminal" — kind, who lived apart from the others. And husbands and wives were much like what they are in the human species, some jealous or engaged in repelling the advance of outside illegitimate lovers, and many husbands dominating their wives, and some wives dominating their husbands.

But the point that interests me was their attitude towards the intruding human stranger (who was already occupied in the characteristically human task of slaughtering them by the hundred to serve as food in hard times to come, though, as it turned out, their flesh became bad before the time to eat it arrived). Some of them, surely by a sound instinct or a true insight, were hostile and aggressive towards the unknown human animal. But others were friendly and affable.

The Hebrew poet-prophet looked forward to

the time when the wolf should dwell with the lamb. That aspiration — not too extravagantly formulated when we remember that the wolf's near relative, the sheep-dog, has long dwelt with the lamb and even become its guardian — might well be regarded as a racial memory of the time when in the early Palæolithic Garden of Eden — before Man had become quite so free as our scientific Antarctic friend in killing creatures who after all would prove uneatable — a large proportion of every animal species which had no reason to treat Man as its prey must really have regarded him in a friendly and affable spirit. It is obvious that by an inevitable process of natural selection, in the measure that Man himself became more predaceous, those strains in every species of animal which were friendly and affable would be gradually killed out, and so all animals become as hostile and suspicious towards Man as we actually find them to be.

Yet the friendly and affable impulse must still be latent in animals (I notice that, already at Kew, even the ordinary wild English birds, having somehow discovered the rules and regulations of the Gardens, are unusually friendly), and it is not impossible that if Man's attitude towards them changes it may emerge afresh. So Isaiah's prophecy would be in some measure real-

ised and we should regain, in some degree, the early Palæolithic Garden of Eden on Earth. Only by that time, with the present devastating fury of Man, how many natural animals will be left?

July 4. — I went to the Tate Gallery to-day to see the show of Cotman's pictures before it closes. It was a "shilling admission" day, I found, and though I am privileged to escape that unjust tax, I am always indignant that it should be imposed at the door of a Gallery which is supposed to be "National," — for if we must have Nationalism let us have not only its vices but a few of its virtues, — so I marched in through the East door with tempered triumph. Of course that toll achieves an end, and there was scarcely anyone there, so that as I passed slowly through the first room and lingered lovingly over a delicious Hogarth I was able to note a well-set-up white-haired old man with a bronzed handsome face in light tweed knickerbocker suit, carrying his travelling cap in his hand. As I still lingered over the Hogarth he passed near me and inquired if I could tell him where the Cotman room was. I replied that I also was on the way to it and felt sure it could not be missed. He evidently desired society and pointing to another Hogarth, a por-

trait, he said: "Very fine — but not equal to Sir Joshua." I have heard of people who can only refer to Reynolds with a veneration half familiar, half religious, as "Sir Joshua," but I had imagined they lived a century ago at least. I was so delighted that, instead of mischievously alluding to Augustus John as "Sir Joshua's" latter-day descendant, which otherwise I might have been inclined to do, I momentarily forgot my own general, though qualified, antipathy to Reynolds and meekly agreed. That sufficed to attach to me my new friend and to make me his compliant victim for the rest of my visit. He soon mentioned that he "painted a little" himself; that had not quite accorded with my impression of his military air, and a little later he referred to "the time when I was in the Army" and so justified my impression. But evidently he was an artist at heart; as we compared our impressions of the Cotman water-colours his taste seemed fine to me, which is of course an altruistic way of saying that it accorded with my own. But, somehow, all the time I seemed to be talking with a man who lived in the remote past, just as, when I meet Mr. Walter Sickert, I seem, for all his vigorous and youthful modernity, to be taken back beyond living memory. It was hard to believe that, reckoned in mere years, this man could not be so enormously

older than I am myself. He talked of the eighteenth-century engravings he had collected fifty years ago, of the artists of old time he had known, of his grandfather's judgment in pictures. To the things which I would have said most conspicuously belonged to "my time" in art he never once referred. I began to think that this must be a Rip Van Winkle of the past, evoked for my delectation, — so many beautiful things happen to me, — and that idea was mightily strengthened when my companion quietly produced an ancient snuff-box and inhaled a pinch with the fine gesture of the old world. Then he drew forth a bandanna handkerchief which also, rightly or wrongly, I have always associated with the same antique ages. Perhaps his knickerbockers, which were a little out of place in the Tate Gallery, should really be regarded as knee-breeches, such as I have been told my own great-grandfather wore, and I too possess my ancestors' snuff-boxes though I have never been tempted to make practical use of them. I seemed to begin to understand why my companion had vaguely remarked that he had "been away a long time." But that illuminating explanation of the situation was dashed when I heard: "As I used to say to the Tommies in France" — for there were no "Tommies" until a considerable time after Uncle

Toby fought in Flanders. Yet, on the whole, as I listened to Colonel Van Winkle, I could not help feeling that I might be talking with my own grandfather who died before I was born. So it was satisfactory to find how thoroughly I could agree with him. I am sometimes called "modern," and there is nothing that I less desire to be called. The only modern things that I care for are those that are as old as the dawn or the rainbow or at least as the wild rose. The things that are commonly called "modern" to-day are the things that will be old-fashioned to-morrow, and if we live among eternal things there is nothing old-fashioned nor anything modern. So it was gratifying to me to find that my new acquaintance, who spoke as it seemed to me my great-grandfather might have spoken, put forth opinions that singularly corresponded to my own. He remarked that in old days life was a beautiful art; he pointed out the finely made earthenware depicted in the works before us; he described how beautifully in his own early days a wheel-barrow was still made. Then, starting from I recall not what, he began, without using the word, to talk eugenics. So it seemed clearer than ever that this solid-looking spectre out of the past had been embodied for my momentary gratification and would melt away as soon as I was gone. But

whether that was so I shall never know. Time passed, I had to leave. He bowed in courtly way. I lifted my hat and departed.

July 8. — "The ideal of love, the ideal that it is better to give than to receive — . . . all the lot — all the whole beehive of ideals — has got the modern bee disease, and gone putrid, stinking." It is not strange to see statements of this kind; they look familiar and one may pass them calmly. But it is perhaps strange that a man who is so anxious to get to the heart of things as Mr. D. H. Lawrence should be so befooled by the clang of words as to set the statement solemnly down.

"It is better to give than to receive." That is an ancient Oriental saying that has come down to us on what used to be thought good authority, and, as a matter of fact, it is profoundly true. It is put into the Oriental form, but one needs little intelligence to discern that the Orientals loved to make statements thus profoundly true in the form of paradox. In our more psychologically analytic way of stating the same truth, to give is better than to receive simply because giving is the most massive and deeply satisfying way of receiving.

Yesterday evening I gave a beautiful peach to

a dear woman who, it appears, likes peaches but never feels that she is entitled to bestow such a luxury upon herself. It happens that I am indifferent to peaches. Yet if I were not, her delight in that fruit tasted far more delicious to me than even my own could. It was better to give than to receive because in giving I received far more than I gave. I do not know whether in my place Mr. Lawrence would have turned away with a woe-begone countenance muttering to himself: "Bang goes saxpence!" But if there is any meaning in his outburst that is clearly what he ought to do. The same relationship exists even in what some consider the most egoistic of all impulses, that of sex. Twenty-three centuries ago, when it is commonly said that what we call love between men and women had not yet been discovered, Aristophanes was able to write in his *Lysistrata* that "there is no pleasure for a man unless the woman shares it." Even in this egoistic matter it is not only better to give than to receive, but one receives nothing unless one gives. If that is true in the most fundamental of natural relationships it is hard to see how there can be any relationship in which it is not true.

It sometimes seems to me that there are certain great elementary test sayings which if a man cannot make his own he is an alien in the world

and a rebel from Nature, fated to be a disconsolate outcast from life. Of these shibboleths which only the children of Heaven, that is to say the children of Nature can utter, one is certainly this: It is more blessed to give than to receive.

July 25. — As, absorbed in my own occupation, my eye chanced to sweep across my window just now, it caught in passing the sensation of a small tree opposite, on the upper reflecting surface of whose leaves a pale London sun was shining, and that sensation appeared to mental perception as it were the lovely image of a pear tree in blossom, such as had joyously flashed on me a few months ago in the garden of a friend at Saffron Walden. At once and with no sense of transition that perception passed on into the thought: Why do we say that the dead die?

It was a great moment in human history when some deeply divining poet of old time — it may well have been as old as Palæolithic time — first became deliberately aware that it is only in so far as it has been planted and rooted within our own minds that anything in the world can in any significant sense be said to live, so that what happens to it in the external world is henceforth of no account. That was such a surprising and overwhelming discovery that one can well believe he

went on to imagine that, if life were really so unlike what it seemed to be, the people he knew might well themselves be alive in some spiritual shape even after they were in all appearance dead. That corollary, however, leaves unaffected the great fundamental fact.

So I linger lovingly over the ever-living symbolic pear-tree that blossoms immortally in my mind.

August 4. — To-day I am reading Taine's *Voyage aux Pyrénées* to attune my mind beforehand to that region. It is the most amusing book of Taine's I have ever read; I never knew he could write with such fun and spirit. It is true he was young then; he was not yet the grey absorbed scholarly recluse I once caught a glimpse of, with the atmosphere of the study still clinging to him even in a lively Parisian salon.

It may seem strange to add that I find Taine most amusing in this book when dealing with the Gascons of old times and when he is concerned with warfare. They had a genius for bloodshed, these Béarnais of Gascony, — which constituted so important a part of the English Empire — and their neighbours the Basques were their worthy fellows. They fought and they danced with the same zest and almost at the same moment. They

knew how to make death a jest and a battle a buffoonery.

This is brought out in one admirable chapter of the book. The rain came down at Bayonne and the inn was insufferable and Taine sought the Public Library, which was closed, but the Librarian had pity on the eminent scholar, who set out to study what he calls a mediæval pastoral, the joyful history of Pé de Puyane. That ancient Gascon hero was an admiral and Mayor of Bayonne in the days that Froissart chronicled. He had red banners flying from his galleys to signify death without mercy, and he thought as little of killing a man as of lifting his hat. He fought much against the Normans and once hanged seventy of them in his yard beside his dogs, and again at the battle of Sluys he captured two French admirals, strangling one and cutting the other's throat, for it would be stupid and dull not to vary the act of killing. But the neighbouring Basques were his best-beloved foes. It occurred to Pé de Puyane that as the lordship of Bayonne possessed the sovereignty of the sea — for he seems to have been a pioneer of the doctrine that "Britannia rules the waves" — then Bayonne was entitled to levy a tax on all places on the sea-coast. Everyone at Bayonne agreed that nothing could be more equitable. But the

Basques laughed scornfully and killed the would-be tax gatherers. Pé de Puyane said nothing, but his face was terrible to see. At last there came a day when the Basques were gathered together to dance and feast. Then Pé's eyes shone like those of a youth who sees his bride approach. He swooped down on the scene of merriment, followed by a faithful band, and with the axes of their sharp-pointed pikes they struck down the Basques, or spitted them on the points, at the Mayor of Bayonne's command, until you could see daylight through some of them. (One recalls that it was at Bayonne the first bayonet was made.) At last only five were left alive and these, out of friendliness, the Mayor fastened to the arches of the bridge at low tide, so that they might not be drowned should the tide fail to rise. So were all destroyed, to the great joy of the whole city, which applauded the spectacle. As I read I remember how, last year, at the Castle of Amboise, when the guide evoked the fantastic vision of hundreds of Huguenot corpses dangling from windows and balconies, I surprised on the face of the sweet little friend by my side, — an ardent pacifist too, and sympathetic to Huguenots — instead of the expression proper to the occasion, a merry twinkling smile, and now I understand that a bubble of the old Gascon blood

I know runs in her veins had risen to the surface. Pé de Puyane's triumph, however, was short-lived. Attack was followed by counter-attack, and in the end the victorious Basques imposed a peace from which Pé and his family were specifically excluded. So he took refuge in the house of his good friend the Prince of Wales at Bordeaux. But one day, when he sallied forth to visit a vineyard he had bought, a knife a fathom long was thrust into his armpit, between the joints of his armour, as he was lifting a huge bunch of grapes. So he died. His son Hugues thereupon set sail for England, where Edward III, remembering the glorious deeds of his father, received him gladly and knighted him, and he became the father of a large family which have done their best to preserve among us the great tradition of what we nowadays call "militarism."

It was an altogether undesigned coincidence. But I now find I could not have been more appropriately occupied to-day than in reading the history of Pé de Puyane. For now, as I glance through to-day's *Times*, I find that it is the anniversary of the outbreak of the Great War and that joyful event has to be celebrated. But nowadays we no longer sing in the glad Gascon fashion:

> "Belle fête aux gens de Bayonne,
> Aux Basques grillades de cochons."

We no longer make the welkin ring with the noise of trumpets and cornets and drums, and a battle has ceased to be a scene of revelry. In our degenerate age war has even become an anachronism, and so we seek to sanctify our buffoonery. When the latest descendant of Pé de Puyane is set to write a leader on "August the Fourth" we feel that a good man is struggling with adversity. "Too august a day," he writes, "for us to permit ourselves to dwell solely upon afflictions and embarrassments." How chilly that would have seemed to Pé! "Security is not the best builder of character; our youth lived dangerously in the year of war." There is a challenge to the Ten Commandments there which might have appealed to Pé. "The historical comfort of a righteous cause." — He might have sniffed at that. It is a creditable performance. But give me Pé de Puyane.

August 18. — It seems that I am not to outgrow my old love of Paris, though there are so many reasons why I might well have outgrown it, and for a long time I thought I had. After all, it has been woven for forty years too familiarly into my life ever to become indifferent, and too intimately ever to cease to be poignant. Among so conservative a people, in a city that changes so

little, there is every chance for the conservation of memories. I see them still, curious or familiar, flowering delicately at almost every step, and at any turn I may find myself treading, with a sudden tender gasp, on my own heart.

There are more impersonal grounds why Paris should seem interesting and delightful. At some parts of the earth my attention has been held in perpetual fascination because I seem to have been dropped into another world. But Paris is not another world. It is the same world, of the same nature, the same kind of people doing the same kind of things. Yet in every detail there is minute variation, an infinite series of minute variations. So that everything I see is familiar, I understand everything without need of explanation, and yet it is always deliciously novel. And the novelty is always a closer approximation to art than I am used to in England. It may, I admit, be bad as well as good art. But even the mere presence of that consciousness of art I find something. For however intensely English I may be in ancestry and temper, I rebel against the English repulsion for the conception of life as an art. Perhaps indeed one might say that it is only by being intensely English that one can love Paris, just as it is only by being superficially English that one would ever feel called upon to

characterise Paris absurdly as "the gay city." It is because it is so poignant, because of its perpetual instinctive approximation towards the standpoint of art, that I find Paris exhilarating and that its rhythm suits me. — Even my watch, which in London this morning was three minutes fast, is here, by the Luxembourg clock, I find, exactly right.[1]

August 19. — "Can you tell me why that is so wonderful?" An English girl, of the modern sort, determined not to take anything on trust, asked the question as she sat down beside me on one of the red-cushioned benches of the Salle de la Vénus de Milo. She was not, fortunately, addressing me but her girl companion, who wisely made no direct reply but proceeded to read out the orthodox statements in her guide-book. I am not sure that they proved convincing.

I was pleased the sceptical question was not addressed to me, not only because I am aware that the intuition of beauty must arise spontaneously and that my explanations could scarcely supply its place, but also because I was myself in a state of feeling rather sympathetic to that which prompted the question.

It is forty years since I first sat on this bench,

[1] But the Luxembourg clock, I found later, was wrong!

— re-covered since then though with the same traditional red plush, — the memory fresh in my mind of how Heine, yet forty years earlier, before finally taking to his mattress-grave had also sat before this figure, "Our Lady of Beauty who has no arms to help us." Some twenty years after I first saw it a photograph of the Venus of Milo was still hanging near me as I worked. I have long ceased to feel its inspiration. If I sought inspiration nowadays in any Greek statuary, it would, I suppose, be in the more archaic, especially perhaps the more variously intimate, the less conventionally divine figures, such as the Demeter and Kore of the Athens Museum.

It is strange when one thinks of it — as I often have thought — how æsthetic appreciation moves backwards in time and not forwards, more towards what seems to us the archaic, though in reality it may be far indeed from the beginning. A century ago the Venus de' Medici was a goddess to whose sacred shrine more pilgrms travelled than to any Madonna of art. Leigh Hunt, though he had no special knowledge of sculpture, really possessed as fine an æsthetic perception as any man of his time in England, and in the delightful *Autobiography* I well remember reading in youth, he confessed his disappointment when at last he stood before that Venus in Florence;

but he admitted that he was the only visitor there who ever had been disappointed, except Hazlitt and Smollett, and he was not altogether pleased to be on the side of the splenetic Smollett. He was evidently a little ashamed of his disappointment, for he devoted many pages to the goddess, and was glad to be able to admire her flanks, the "hips and sides" in his modest phrase. But, when I in my turn nearly forty years after Leigh Hunt wrote his *Autobiography* came for the first time to Florence, I had grown up in an atmosphere in which this statue seemed merely the elegant degradation of a far away older, more beautiful type, so that I felt no disappointment, only indifference, even a little amusement.

We are now again, almost without knowing it, at the turn of a new shifting of taste, and but a few years ago, Guy Dickins, whose knowledge and judgment were alike of the finest quality, set forth clearly, — and to my great satisfaction at all events, — the reasons which justify us in regarding the Melian Aphrodite as, though indeed still a beautiful work, occupying a somewhat undeserved position, being the Hellenistic second century B.C. copy of an earlier more intelligible type, here awkwardly modified into a motiveless pose.

It would seem that as we become more civil-

ised, as our æsthetic feeling becomes more sensitive, we are ever more and more repelled by the efflorescence of decadence, ever more drawn by an earlier beauty. (There is of course always also the concomitant opposite attraction, since one cannot have any action without reaction.) Nothing seems to me nowadays more attractive in Greek sculpture than the Ionian Korai of the Acropolis, while there are some who would push back the attraction of the primitive to savagery, and admire the crudest beginnings of art.

That is why I am pleased that I am not called upon to explain to the girl by my side why the Venus of Milo is "so wonderful."

August 21. — We had climbed up to Montmartre to gaze down at the great city below, this fairly clear afternoon, and on the walk down I was drawn by an old association of the spot to seek once more, as on my first visit to Paris, the grave of the best-loved poet, after Shelley, of my youth. It was forty years ago but I still recalled the right turn and soon we came across the *gardien* who, it turned out, was on his way, watering pot in hand, to the tomb we sought. It was no longer the plain slab I had seen of old; a meaningless pile of marble had been placed there, so that the old poignant simplicity had gone and

no beauty came in its place. But there was a wreath of fresh flowers lying there, and the *gardien*, who remarked that many people come to visit this grave, evidently found it worth his while to keep them sprinkled with water.

The pompous funereal monuments of Rochefort, of Labiche, of all the rest, who played their noisy and ostentatious parts on the world's stage, stand around in this crowded cemetery, dusty and melancholy now, deserted of all men. Over the ashes alone of this dreamer, — who knew how to turn to immortal music the desire and the laughter of human hearts which smile at their own desires and their own laughter, — they still scatter the fragrant offering of flowers and tears.

August 31. — The station is only a *halte*, and so brief a halt, with no sign of its existence save one shrill delayed cry of the woman in charge of it, that the train is already moving on again before we have both descended, no one else alighting here. A little country walk of three kilometres lies ahead, and we cross the bridge over the Garonne, no great river up here, along a road bordered by large walnut-trees, and apple-trees laden with the deep red fruit Cézanne loved to paint. Before long we see ahead the hill which is our goal, with its walled ramparts and the Cathe-

dral Church that crowns its summit. Before we reach it we pass a little village, behind which is the church of St. Just, dating in its present rough and massive shape from the ninth century, when it had already been for a couple of centuries the temporary cathedral of a diocese which has long ceased to exist, and it is still a parish church. Another kilometre, and we have reached the ancient city on the hill. At its foot is a small group of comparatively modern houses built in the Pyrenean manner of this district, with two limbs enclosing a rectangular space which usually faces south. The site is Roman, and a few years ago one of these proprietors found on his land the Gallo-Roman theatre and beautiful mosaics of the ancient city which was destroyed in the fourth century. The war came and these remains were covered up; since then the owner's wife has died and now he refuses to allow anything to be touched. We climb the winding road upwards, pause in the little old Belvidere to gaze on the outstretched view, and enter the city by its chief gate, beside the sixteenth-century house, the finest in the place, which was sometime the episcopal palace.

Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, situated on an isolated rock and described in the guide-book as one of the most bizarre places in France, is now

only a great village with a few hundred inhabitants. But for six or seven centuries it was the cathedral city of a vast diocese broken up at the Revolution and divided among the neighbouring dioceses of France and Spain. Its patron saint seems to have been a really remarkable person, and the present Curé Doyen — that title seems the only touch of ecclesiastical distinction now clinging to the place — has written his life at length in a scholarly spirit, however sprinkled with miracles he admits to be dubious. Bertrand de l'Isle was born in the eleventh century near Toulouse, a Count's son and related on both sides to some of the noblest and gallantest ruling families of the time, while his mother was very pious. He was bred, according to the fashion of the time, partly in a monastery, partly in the courts of princes, for in the politico-ecclesiastical turbulence of that period a young nobleman must be able to be either a knight on the field or a bishop in the cathedral, and the two spheres of action were not indeed widely different. Bertrand shone in both, on the field, probably against the Saracens who were constantly devastating the Pyrenees from Spain. But while still in "the flower of his age" he abandoned the world to become one of the canons, there under a strict Augustinian rule, of Toulouse, and not long after,

so great had his fame become as archdeacon of Toulouse, he was elected as their bishop by the chapter of the city to which he was to give his name. He soon set about to rebuild the cathedral on its ancient and original Gallo-Roman site on the top of the hill, in the Romanesque manner of the time, and later it was completed in the Gothic manner.

Bertrand de l'Isle was more than a great architect, more than a great apostle, he was also a great ruler and amply lived up to his quality as Count of the City. He forwarded its material as well as its spiritual prosperity, although in the end it has turned out that the spiritual life of the hill has long outlived its material vigour. Bertrand was speedily canonised, and, living and dead, his record is crowded with miracles, but it is clear that here was a great man who needed neither canonisation nor miracles to prove his claim to human reverence.

When we remember all that this spiritual hill-fortress has passed through it is surprising to find how much there is left. Constant wars, much looting, destructive fires, the ravages of the Huguenots, the poverty which compelled the sale of valuables, the hard hand of the Revolution, the claims of Museums — and yet Saint Bertrand-de-Comminges is crowded with pre-

cious things, the richest archæological treasury of the Pyrenees. To me no part of the church is so attractive as the cloisters, the home of the canonry St. Bertrand had set up under that Augustinian rule he had learned to know at Toulouse, and still, though of various dates, in part of his time. It has been much dilapidated and the upper story removed, yet its peaceful charm remains as well as its archæological interest, for it is more in the Spanish manner than any cloisters I recall in France, which is indeed natural since Spain is here so near and St. Bertrand's dearest friend and helper was a son of the King of Aragon.

The outstanding feature of all, however, is the sixteenth-century wood-carving of the great organ in the north-west angle of the nave, with a pulpit woven around one of its pillars, and especially the woodwork of the choir. Here we see in superb untrammelled vigour the spirit of the Middle Ages — imaginative and pious and grotesque and innocently obscene — carried on into the Renaissance and expressing itself magnificently in all the new artistic power of that time. We must be endlessly grateful to Jean de Mauléon, the Bishop to whose initiative all this carving is due.

The cathedral is of a piece with the town in its

general air of peaceful contented well-kept desolation, a little reminding one of Malta's Citta Vecchia, that other ancient inland capital on a height, larger indeed and more imposing, this better set in a vastly more magnificent framework of mountains and villages. I note as a mark of the place the semi-circular tympana on the door-ways of any pretension, of white marble with varied designs in relief.

One speaks of Saint Bertrand as deserted, but at this season of the year an important qualification must be made. A stream of people descending from their various vehicles flows into the church during many hours of the day. These people, a few of them tourists, most of them pilgrims, do not linger; they descend from their vehicles, they march into the church, they are conducted around the choir, by the lady who seems to be the *curé's* sister, or else by her servant, and in the afternoon the gentle sympathetic *curé* is himself posted in the sacristy to point out the sandals which the saint is said to have worn, and his huge gloves, and his ivory crozier, reported to be made of a single unicorn's horn; and then pilgrims and tourists march out and mount their vehicles and are swiftly borne back again to Lourdes or Luchon or whatever centre may be their temporary home. Not one of them lingers

to inhale the delicate antique atmosphere of this rare spot, for nowadays religion and pleasure alike must be taken in a businesslike spirit, at the highest speed, and whether in that process the essence of either of them is lost seems a matter of no concern. The swift procession begins at ten in the morning, about which time the bronchitic old lady on the left of the western portal is setting up her little barrack of postcards and photographs, and the younger woman on the right her sweetmeat stall. Long before dusk the last visitor has come and gone, and we each heave an agreeable sigh.

For the rest we may enjoy our hotel — the only hotel at Saint Bertrand — in peace. It is a long rambling old building facing the west end of the cathedral and close to the town fountain, while at the back is a terrace, on the adjacent ancient wall of the town, superbly overlooking luxuriant slopes of wooded heights and distant mountains. I amuse myself with imagining that before it became the hotel of Saint-Bertrand it was the town residence of the last eighteenth-century Bishop and that this spacious and pleasant bedroom was his, with its bed canopied in the manner shown in the illustrations to the stories of the younger Crébillon and the little holy water stoup by my side figuring Christ and the woman

of Samaria by the well, and the wallpaper so ancient in pattern, though well preserved, that the old landlady knows nothing of its origin. It is a pleasant place to spend a few days in, and pleasant to dine on the terrace while the dusk slowly draws a veil over the Garonne valley and the jagged height of Gar, and the sound of the threshing of the beans below grows still, and another dream of calm and joyous beauty is woven into our memories.

September 22. — "Did you ever hear of So-and-So?" It is a question now and then directed to me and sometimes I have heard of So-and-So. The question may even give me a little touch of pain, for I may not only have felt a vivid interest in So-and-So, but come personally in contact with a noble and attractive personality whose name was once familiar in the world, and is now, a few years later — as this question implies — scarcely to be discerned at all in the deep abyss of the past.

The callous brutality of those who would cover the world, and are indeed now covering it, beneath a vast squirming mass of humanity, indistinguishable and unintelligible, is offensive from many points of view. But I often think piteously of it in this especial respect that so many noble

and beautiful persons are thereby swiftly lost in the mass who might well have been preserved, lovely and fragrant in men's minds, and not be dropped and forgotten like impersonal things, like yesterday's sunset or the roses of which we neglect to collect and preserve even the perfumed petals.

While meekly awaiting another Jehovah with his purifying Flood, and another eugenic Ark, I gaze sadly at all the eager and aspiring young people of the present youthful generation, so hopeful of making a name in the world, or, in the absence of that hope, so worthy to make it, and I think how, in a few years they, too, will swiftly drop out of men's minds in an over-crowded world and become merely So-and-So. — "Have you ever heard of So-and-So?"

October 10. — A friend tells me with amusement that on going to his dentist he was greeted with the remark: "I saw you in the street the other day and thought how well you were looking: 'My teeth!' I said to myself." My friend attributed his well-being to quite other causes. Yet it is evident we must all view the universe from an ego-centric standpoint and emphasise our own part in its reverberations. If my friend had walked a little further he might have met his

butcher who would perhaps have chuckled to himself: "My meat!" Yet further, and there would be his publisher (for my friend is an author) pensively ejaculating: "My cheques!" And in the distance his best girl might catch a glimpse of him and shyly murmur to herself: "My kisses!"

And perhaps, after all, each one of them would be right.

November 1. — Men of genius — and still less women of genius — should never be regarded as "great moral teachers." Morality, as I have sometimes tried to explain, means the manners and customs, with the corresponding ways of feeling and thinking, of the majority of a community at any given time and place. That definition alone suffices to exclude genius, for genius cannot belong to the majority. By the failure to realise this inevitable and even elementary fact we prepare unpleasant surprises for ourselves and also make the path of genius still harder than, even at the best, it is bound to be.

In recent years Tolstoy has furnished the most conspicuous example of this truth. He was, in fiction at all events, the greatest genius of his time, one of the world's supreme manifestations of genius. He sought also to impress the world,

not only in philosophy and in religion, but in morals. Yet he had neither the genius for intellect nor the genius for conduct to enable him to pass beyond mediocrity in any of these fields; he remained a supreme artist. His lamentable passing from life, of which the precise circumstances have been published this year, furnished to such a temperament in such an environment the naturally inevitable end.

Morality, being an attribute of the majority, cannot be perfectly exhibited by one who in his essence is not of the majority. He may, by virtue of insight, be a pioneer of a superior morality, which may, or may not, become that of a later majority; his own attempt to live it adequately can only be a tragic disaster, as we see typically represented in the story of Jesus. Lao-tze and Buddha and Jesus were of superior genius in religion, but if mankind had accepted them as moral leaders society would speedily have been dissolved. So, among women, Sappho and St. Theresa and George Eliot are worthy of all reverence for their achievements in art or in religion, but as exquisite emanations of the moral life they have doubtless been surpassed by many an unknown woman who was merely "a violet by a mossy stone half hidden from the eye."

November 7. — As one grows older, I note with unceasing surprise and amusement, the world more and more bears the aspect of play. That is to say, according to the theory of play which is associated with Schiller's name, it is for the most part an expenditure of energy in exuberant and unnecessary ways. As one grows older, no doubt one has less excess of energy and that may well be one of the reasons why one grows more sensitively alive to the exuberant and unnecessary character of the actions of men and women in general, which make life to consist so much in play.

The really essential things in life, if one looks strictly at it, are simple and few. So simple and so few that we are inclined to hide them from sight, to forget them; we may even attempt to neglect them altogether. It is especially so in youth. For youth is solemn. It has, I suppose, so much superfluous energy that that exuberance seems to it necessary, and indeed the only necessity, and so it may never see the really necessary things at all. That is partly why childhood is so often a drama, a tragic drama. That, again, is why nearly all crimes of violence are perpetrated by the young. That is why we have war, for war would be impossible but for the eager readiness of youth to be bloodthirsty and solemn, and to talk seriously of "glory" and "patriotism," and to

use all the other play-words. They tell us that this is all as it should be, for war cultivates the virtue of courage and keeps the population down. It might be suggested that there are more useful ways of cultivating courage and less gruesome methods of controlling the growth of the population. But it is not permitted to diminish the solemn drama of life or to interfere with the conventional worship of youth, and it would not be decorous to ask whether playful foolery might not be as good for mankind as solemn foolery.

Yesterday I went to the Phœnix's performance of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* — more or less appropriately accompanied by a beautiful American Jewess — and it only now occurs to me that these reflections may have their unconscious source in that play. For all the symbolism of youth is here in its exalted and bloodthirsty Elizabethan shape, only Marlowe, possessing not only Elizabethan youth but also high genius, has deliberately inserted touches of irony and humour into the presentation, so that yesterday the audience was not sure whether to grieve or to laugh over the tragedy. As we grow older it must ever be so in face of the tragedy of youth.

November 9. — I awoke, soon after falling asleep, from a dream in which I had seen myself

lying fully dressed on a rug close to a hot fire. I entered the room, approached, bent low over myself, and saw that during my absence the fire had grown very fierce, so that my clothes and apparently my body were smouldering. I was concerned — though in no inordinate degree — for it seemed to me very doubtful that I should ever be able to use my body again.

On carefully searching memory I was able to recall various slight impressions and sensations of the day which may well have furnished the elements synthetised in the dream, but the synthesis itself was totally alien to my waking mind.

There are many, I believe, who still refuse to accept the influence of dreams in moulding our waking beliefs and the most fundamental superstitions of human history. I have never doubted it ever since I began to think about the matter at all. If all over the world the belief in "spirits" may be found, and even in the highest civilisations the conception of Man's "spiritual" nature still persists, how can we refuse to accept the influence of the mechanism of dreams in aiding to evolve and maintain those beliefs?

November 24. — This Cornish November — and it is a more typical and prolonged Cornish "St. Martin's summer" — than I seem ever to

have known — is for me a perpetual miracle. I remain always virginal to its gracious influence. It is hard to remember I have felt it so often before, still harder to realise that it is only yesterday I left London where for ten days I had been breathing sooty fog beneath a dank and cheerless sky.

"I cannot bother about climate," a friend wrote to me the other day. I do not share that attitude; on the contrary, I would be more inclined to say that climate is the only thing worth "bothering" about. At all events I would certainly regard it, together with love and philosophy, as one of the things most necessary to the soul, as distinct from the body. (I know, of course, that the distinction between the soul and the body is arbitrary and merely conventional; yet it remains convenient, just as it remains convenient to speak of the sunrise, and it even has in it, rightly understood, a real significance.) For it is a joy of the soul that I experience here, transcending whatever may always remain alien to me and aloof in this land of Cornwall, and my heart sings the Prologue of the angels in Heaven over a world that is

"Herrlich wie am ersten Tag."

So I wander in ecstasy about this valley of the

blue-flowered privet, therefrom, it is said, once called Sciedgewith, on the flanks of the Lizard, and now wrapt in a calm silence beneath a cloudless sky, while a smooth ocean strikes with a gentle leisurely resounding plash against the cliffs, plash so full of reminiscence that it almost brings tears to my eyes. An occasional dead leaf falls slowly and softly to earth, but the birds are always alive and their twittering is dominated by the thrush, lordly and indefatigable artist. Now and again I see one of the dainty Neolithic girls of this land pass by — so out of date in an age of coal and iron and electricity — demurely vivacious, one with her milk-can, another in her short skirts astride a horse, while the fishermen are busier with their boats than they ever seemed to be last winter. Then I fling myself down in the complete solitude of the hillside over the sea to bask full length in the sun, while the gulls move around in spiral flight, a maze of white and sparkling stars against the blue, and two strange birds circle over me with a peculiar and rather personally intoned emphatic chuckle to greet and welcome me back.

November 14. — "Like the ostrich that hides its head in the sand" — One wonders whether any other simile is by civilised Man so often ap-

plied to himself, or rather to other members of his species, as that image. Anyone who ventures into the beaten roads of journalism, or other literature of the degraded popular sort, during recent centuries cannot fail to hear the familiar sound of this simile, tolling like a funeral bell, at intervals, it would almost seem, of only a few minutes.[1]

One knows, almost instinctively, that the ostrich cannot possibly do anything of the sort. To make sure, I once inquired of a friend who happens to be the chief authority on the manners and customs of the ostrich — for in his writings on the subject he had not even condescended to mention this superstition — and he told me that the ostrich really has a habit which might give some faint show of plausibility to such a supposition, and that by lowering its head the ostrich is really enabled to become less conspicuous. But Man remains the only biped which puts its head in the sand, closing its eyes in order to be able to ignore the facts. No bird could afford to do it. The world is not made for the survival of such. Even Man could not afford to do it if in his earlier stages he had not been clever enough to build

[1] The earliest reference given in the *Oxford Dictionary* is from an anonymous writer of 1623: "Like the Austridge who, hiding her little head, supposeth her great body obscured." It is not clear to me when the statement originated. I do not notice it in Pliny.

around himself a great protective wall within which he can now indulge all the vagaries of his stupidity with seeming impunity.

So from the days of the book of *Job* and the *Lamentations* of Jeremiah, and I know not how far earlier, Man has sent the ostrich out into the desert as the scapegoat to bear his own vices of stupidity and cruelty fastened to its head. And the passing bell of that simile continues to be heard at regular intervals, while the solemn procession of human imbecilities passes slowly along the roads of the world towards that eternal cemetery which is not yet in sight: "Like the ostrich that hides its head in the sand —."

November 25. — "Zola, Daudet, and all their followers are not worthy to untie the shoe-laces of Dostoevski." So Taine said to De Vogüé nearly forty years ago. All the world thinks so now. But it needed the insight of genius to see it in 1884. That it should have been just Taine to possess that insight a little puzzles me, for I do not easily associate a passion for Dostoevski with the tall grave scholarly unseeing person whom I remember catching a glimpse of as he emerged — with that air of feeling his way which short-sighted persons sometimes have — as I was entering the afternoon At Home of a distin-

guished lady in Paris who had invited me to meet the great critic, though fearful of arriving too early I arrived too late.

"All the world thinks so now." But does it? It cannot be long since I was astonished to read in Kropotkin's little book on Russian literature that he was unable to get through the *Brothers Karamazov*. Now I am no devourer of novels. I approach them with many precautions. For the most part I have found Cervantes and Fielding, Tolstoy and Flaubert, Stendhal and Proust, Hardy and Conrad and Régnier enough — sometimes more than enough — for me, except when the curiosity of novelty leads me to try little-known books, or some friend writes a novel in which I hope to find at all events a congenial human document. But the *Brothers Karamazov* I feel as though I could read again and again, almost, I was about to say — but that would be excessive — as I feel about *Wilhelm Meister*. Kropotkin, I should have thought, possessed the essential Russian temperament, the same impulse to saintliness, which should have made him sympathetic, even though he moved on another plane, to Dostoevski. But no doubt I should remember that we are most hostile to those who are most slightly separated from us, and that I have often observed that the saints, while infinitely

tender to sinners, are apt to be censorious towards fellow-saints.

Yet Dostoevski a saint? With this man, you see, one is always asking questions, and that may well be in part why he is fascinating. One would say there ought not to be room for questions: no artist has more faithfully squeezed out — as we commonly say expressed — in his work his own most intimate nature. It ought all to be quite simple. Yet it is ever the simplest things that are the hardest. The simplicity of Dostoevski was highly complex. His was a profoundly human nature, and that is tolerably simple, but his humanity was highly morbid, and that involves a problem which is no longer simple. Dostoevski was a genuinely epileptic subject, and that, which seems to be an unquestioned fact, alone renders him a unique phenomenon, because, so far as we positively know, there has been no other genuinely and unquestionably epileptic man of literary genius, for the case of Flaubert is too dubious. Now epilepsy is apt to be associated with moral perversity, and one asks oneself what the perversities were that obsessed Dostoevski. It is not a question it yet seems possible to answer precisely, for those who might have answered it have been reticent and uttered veiled sayings. Dr. Gaston Loygue, in his valuable and

illuminative medico-psychological study of Dostoevski, not only brings out the constantly recurring algolagnic strain in the novelist's work, but repeatedly states that there are facts in Dostoevski's life which cannot yet be published without indiscretion. When we recall the peculiar fascination which in his work children seem to exercise on Dostoevski, and the naked intimacy of his touch where they are concerned, one seems to divine a significance in Stavrogin's confession — the passage omitted from *The Possessed* on moral grounds — and lately printed in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* — and the significance of that paidophilic and sadistic incident lies precisely in the peculiar hesitant mystery in which it is enveloped. (How clearly and objectively the normal Balzac, to say nothing of Zola, would have brought it forward.) Merejkovski, who called attention to this passage long before it was published, remarked that it was easy to understand its continued suppression for it is of a sincerity which goes beyond art. It is not necessary to conclude that Dostoevski ever carried morbid impulse to completed action. Doubtless he possessed manifold perverse impulses which may have remained impulses except in so far as they were transmuted into art. But their significance, we have to realise, is not normal but abnormal.

By the fundamental texture of his soul Dostoevski could only rise to the divine from a human foundation that was perverse, and what it was in the beginning it necessarily remained, however sublimated, in the end. Dostoevski was the Saint of Sinners, and all his work — to so complete a degree that many superficial readers have been thereby deceived — the Idealisation of Perversity.

November 27. — I have walked once again by the familiar path to Kynance, as ever completely deserted at this time of the year, so that when I stood at the top of the cliff lost in dreams of the past, a dog, who seemed in sole possession of the little hotel far down below, catching sight of me, barked irritably at my intrusion on his privacy, until I discreetly disappeared along the opposite slope and settled down in the sunshine with my note-book.

It was not only dreams of the past that filled my brain. I had also been meditating as I came along the path on a subject that has sometimes occupied me before, the philosophy of obscenity, and its æsthetic place in life and in art, a subject for which this pure sky and clear water form the desirable background. There had casually flitted across my mind the thought of a woman who had

visited me shortly before I left London, and that started the problem afresh. For my friend approaches the subject of obscenity with an undismayed air which seems to savour not at all of the English and even Puritanic environment out of which she springs. It is not that she suffers from too bridled or too unbridled a sexuality — she is the happy wife of a husband to whom she is devoted — nor is her serenity that of innocent indifference, for she is alertly interested while yet retaining a shy modesty. I am inclined to find the key to her attitude in the fact that there is Indian blood in her veins, and that she is remotely of the race of Vatsyayane, though she never, I think, read his book.

So I seem to see why in the modern western world, especially in England, most of all in America, it has become so difficult to be rightly obscene — and so unnaturally easy to be coarse and vulgar — and why obscenity is treated with so much reprehension and even horror. The natural play of the impulses has been checked; the particular twist of our culture has on one side impeded the manifestations of obscenity and on the other side, when that impulse has burst its bonds, subjected it to our British tendency to what Coleridge called *nimiety*, too-muchness, with the inevitable result that a natural reaction

of disgust has been set up to fortify the artificial reaction of moral propriety. An old friend now dead — his sister had been a famous mystic and he himself once a Franciscan father, so perhaps he considered he was privileged to cultivate the esoteric branches of erotic literature — once lent me that huge novel of Cleland's which is considered the masterpiece among obscenely erotic books in English, and after the first hundred pages or so I found it tedious. One may approve of obscenity in principle; in practice even its recognised masters barely attain success.

Certainly, into every great and true picture of life there must necessarily enter both its obverse and reverse sides, not only the revelation of the stage but the intimation of what Lucretius called the *postscenia vitæ*. Without an element of the obscene there can be no true and deep æsthetic or moral conception of life. But the obscene must be kept in its place, it must be controlled, it must be held in due relation to the whole. Only those who have been well trained in watching the stage of life can dare successfully to complete the picture by revealing life behind the scene. That no doubt is why in our northern world the great writers who have been obscene were mostly trained in the Church; they needed that discipline, they needed that vision of the world, to be

æsthetically obscene. That also, no doubt, is why the merely loose and small undisciplined men can never be rightly obscene, however hard they try. It is only the great men who are truly obscene. It is that touch which stamps their genius. It gives profundity and truth to their vision of life. If they had not dared to be obscene they could never have dared to be great. Their vision of the world would have remained fatally marred.

November 30. — When I was in Saffron Walden Museum in the spring, trying to make out clearly the difference between a thrush and a missel thrush, I glanced at a blackbird and realised, with a shock of surprised pleasure, that it may be defined, among the birds of its family, as a deeply pigmented thrush. I had discovered, for the first time clearly, what may well be a fact familiar to most people. But for me the discovery was full of revelation: it opened out a far vista along which I have from time to time been gazing ever since.

It so happens that to me the blackbird's song, apart from any estimate of its artistic value in the world of bird-music, happens to be peculiarly congenial. I regard it — so indeed it is usually regarded — as a contralto song. Moreover the music and the kinds of musical instruments that appeal to me intimately — again apart from the

question of purely æsthetic appreciation — are usually those that may be said to be of the same quality. Even in dancing, it is the slow and grave quality of certain Spanish dances which has expressed to me most nearly the intuition of what in the field of rhythmic movement is called "Beauty." But in other fields also it is still what may reasonably be regarded as the same quality transformed which makes an intimate personal appeal to me. It is similarly that, however impartially I may accept all colours in their place, I would yet desire them fully saturated. It seems not difficult, if it were worth while, to trace the same harmony of transformed concordances in other fields. It is, indeed, after all, what we call *style*. Each individual has his own structure, and all his modes of æsthetic sensibility, all his activities based on those modes, however endlessly various, yet take on the same individual form, and move with the same rhythm. The interesting new thing I see is a harmony not only in the style of the organised personality's soul, but also even on the physical plane, the style of Nature. I have sometimes been inclined to feel that of musical forms the fugue — in which the same theme is constantly heard yet never in quite the same form — is nearest to the essence of Nature. It could not be otherwise if Nature is thus a per-

petual fugue, forever repeating the same thing on a new and different plane.

There is yet another step to take. What is true of the style of the individual personality is true also — and that is not strange if we are concerned with elemental Nature — of the style of a whole culture or civilisation. It has often flashed across my mind that every age is always saying the same thing, its own peculiar message, in different forms. Of recent years — worked out in an elaborately emphatic way and in what may sometimes seem fantastic detail — that has become the Spenglerian conception of culture. Spengler, as we know, holds that in the old classic world the conception of a city-state, the nude statue, Euclid's geometry, Greek coins, were all various expressions of the same cultural soul, all saying the same thing in different ways, and that the like is true of our own civilisation, which expresses itself similarly in printing, in credit, in perspective, in contrapuntal music, in long-range artillery, in many other things that at first glance look no less unlike.

So every person that is a person, every civilisation, every universe, may have its own style, its own peculiar rhythm, multifoldly expressed in all its most varied manifestations. That is the vista along which I look. It seems all to stretch out

from my great and no doubt simple-minded discovery at Saffron Walden that the blackbird is a deeply pigmented thrush.

December 23. — François de Curel, it appears, in his play *Ame en Folie*, brings forward the Darwinian theory, and puts face to face what seem to him the opposing pictures of an animal world in which sexual selection is effected by force and a human world in which — as it were contrary to "Nature" — sexual selection operates by the subtler influence of affinity determined by love and beauty.

That is, of course, a complete perversion of the matter, whether as presented in the world of facts or in the pages of Darwin. But that a dramatist commonly regarded as of high intellectual quality should find this a reasonable view seems to give us an insight into many popular delusions.

In Nature generally "brute" force is only an occasional accident of courtship, which is primarily affected by the more gracious appeal of strength to the sense, sometimes developed into an art and sometimes displayed in the very texture of the body, whether through energy or skill or dance or song or colour or fragrance; while, as to love, if a devotion which dares death is proof of

love, it is found oftener among so-called brutes than among men. This rule of beauty and love in sexual selection prevails not only among the lower animals but also in Man at the stages below barbarism, when it began to be transformed. It is then that the rule of force in affairs generally, which Man is supposed to transcend, becomes clearly pronounced. Its application in civilised human life is cruder, more direct, more ruthless than it is among either the lower animals or the lower human races, that is to say, those still in a state of savagery. War, for instance, which may well be of comparatively late appearance in human history, seems long to have been a harmless and even beneficial kind of sport; it was civilisations which rendered it deadly. The American journalist who wrote not so many years ago "Your soldier is only a glorified athlete and war is the greatest of all sports" was stating a great truth, though he stated it some five thousand years too late.

But that change, on the side of sexual selection, goes with another change of not less revolutionary character: the female no longer chooses the male, but — in principle or what we might call theory which is by no means always practice, for naturally the older principle, though overlaid, is still there and still operative — the male

chooses the female. These two facts, we see, are of the same order and merely different aspects of a single change in life. With the approach of civilisation force gains a predominating part and woman takes a more subordinate place, the chosen rather than the chooser.

If what we call force is in a sense unnatural, if it has, as we may find reason to believe, a disintegrating influence even on the civilisation that brings it into credit, what would seem to follow? Shall we see a return towards the once more normal state through men claiming the beauty which was once rightfully theirs and women once again becoming the choosers rather than the chosen in sexual selection? Perhaps indeed that is what the species is already, on a new plane, feeling its way towards.

Christmas Day. — When I ponder, as it has often been my lot to do, on the details of the intimate histories of men and women — on that side of the sphere of life, I mean, which is not shown to the sun — I am so often impressed by the benefits they derive, whether or not they are always willing to recognise it, from what we commonly hold to be weaknesses and vices.

We may, of course, argue — and that is indeed the consideration which most often commends

itself to me, — that we are called upon so to reconstruct our conventional scheme of right and of wrong, of good and of evil, that nothing which aids a human soul in its path through life, provided it injures no other soul, should ever be termed a weakness or a vice.

Yet even if we preserve our conventional scheme of moral rules, and evade any revolutionary moral reconstruction, there is still ample scope for the practice of the higher virtues of judgment and charity. It is still open to us to exercise sympathy and insight; we may still exert our intelligence in unravelling those complicated threads of life and character which are never twisted in quite the same strands for any two individuals. Thus we may find that what we continue to insist on describing technically as a weakness or a vice is justified by its joy-bestowing and life-stimulating properties. We shall have to say, as Goethe said, with his usual assurance of the Divine Process, that God has given us our naughtinesses to help us. He might have added that when they fail to help us it is best to give them back with as little delay as possible.

January 15, 1923. — Those whom we love sometimes feel, when we have been or seemed to

be unkind, even if they do not say: "You will be sorry when I am dead." It is a natural thing to feel and the thought that it has been felt cannot but bring a pang to our hearts. And yet — are we right to feel sorry?

For if we truly loved we have done our best, we have been moved by the strongest motive in all the world to do our best, and if all our failures and weaknesses and perversities have not been more than balanced by the strong achievements of our love, then we must be from the outset but poor creatures, so to fail in the most joyous task in the whole world, creatures too poor for sorrow, even their own.

The transformation of love effected by death is really the problem that here concerns us. It is mainly an intellectual problem. No emotional disposition suffices to help here. It may only lead to vain and meaningless remorse. We are really in the presence of a psychological mutation. Madame de Noailles (when speaking after his death of her long friendship with Marcel Proust) has delicately perceived this. She remarks how the death of dear friends suddenly presents them to us "tout entiers." Our life with those we love is necessarily made up of a perpetual succession of detailed episodes. The very diversities of life involve constant difference of reaction; the very

closeness of the bonds of intimate affection involve a sort of combat which itself testifies to the spiritual contact. But from the moment of final silence the small diversities of life pass out of view and the combat instantly falls, all the hours shared together are suddenly grouped, for the first time, into a single whole. "Oh! how just, divine, and mysterious a thing it is never to be able to think again of the dead as we thought of him living!" There may be a peculiar significance in this reflection when we remember that it was suggested by so perverse a personality as Proust seems to have possessed, yet it has in some degrees a general justification.

For this sudden fact of death instantly moves from our feet a revolving earth that was made of rapid passing episodes — now arduous, now anxious, now delicious — and transforms it all into a distant and unchangeable star. All the conflicts of life and all its agitations have grown as meaningless as its passing delights. The difference in our emotional attitude is an inescapable adjustment to a new relationship. At first the star seems afar because we miss the earth at our feet. But the star remains and shines ever brighter in our eyes as the memories of earth grow dim.

February 20. — One remembers the remark of Goethe to Eckermann that women are plates of silver on which men place apples of gold. In a recent book I see that symbolic remark brought forward as a sort of fundamental fact of the evolution of love. As Goethe said it, however, it was simply a fine and true statement of his own personal experience as an artist, for he proceeded to explain that the women characters in his works were not abstracted from reality but "inborn or arising within him God knows how," and, on that account, "better than those met in reality." He had indeed often brought the golden apple of his art to women who were, at best, of silver. That must always happen to the artist more often than not. Golden art is rare, and women — or men — of gold are likewise rare, so that it can seldom happen that the apple of gold is placed on the dish of gold. One knows little or nothing of Shelley's Emilia or Poe's Helen, but we could not possibly expect them to be of such fine gold as the exquisitely wrought dishes on which they are for ever set before the world. The divine Beatrice whom the artist creates must always be of a nobler metal than the ordinary earthly girl of that name whom God was content to create. But no artist has created apples of finer gold than Sappho, and we may be sure that whether they

were offered to men or to women the plates were at the best only of silver. It is a question of the quality of art and the quality of human nature, and not a question of sex.

But that is not all. When Goethe's saying is solemnly universalised it is forgotten that there are also golden apples of human nature, apples of love as well as of art. And of these apples, also, it may be said that they are set on plates of silver, indeed by no means seldom on plates of just common pottery which in a short time are broken. Nor can it be said that these plates are more often of feminine than of masculine gender. Indeed nearly all the golden love-letters of the world have been written by women and they have for the most part been written to men who were of far less precious substance than gold.

So again I find that Goethe's saying, however precisely true in the sense in which it was uttered, will not bear translation into a larger philosophical statement. I am not likely to underestimate the mental and physical differences of sex. But I object to the assumption of such differences where none exist, and where we have to seek a cleavage along other than sexual lines.

March 3. — I saw a man, turning out from a side street near where I live, who was somehow

not like other people: a shabbily dressed old man, wearing a very old coat with a fur collar, and he carried a very old leather bag with a Maltese Cross painted on it, and he walked with the quiet preoccupied air of a man who took himself altogether as a matter of course, while to me he was an object of joy and speculation (like the Spanish pilgrim I once saw in the streets of Zamora with great cockleshells fastened to his coat, strayed it seemed out of the mediæval world) whose inexplicable presence momentarily exhilarated the whole of life.

Now why cannot there be more people like that? Why cannot everyone be like that? That is to say, all totally unlike everyone else among the millions surrounding them and yet each in his unique way just his own serene matter-of-fact self and a source of joy and speculation to the beholder? The reason I find the people in the street so dull and depressing is that, as deeply as I can penetrate in the single glance of them I catch, I seem vaguely to have seen nearly every one of them before. What I ask of each individual is that he or she should be a perpetual and unique miracle. It seems but a little to ask. Nature is a perpetual miracle, and why should Man, who supposes himself to be so supreme a product of Nature, be so dull and depressing in the mass? I

fill my life and my thoughts as I may with the few rare people I have known who are perpetually miraculous. Yet I see no reason why they should be so rare, so fatally held in grip by the herd instinct.

And why should not communities, cities, states, be themselves? So that therewith each might work out the mode of life, with all its latent new possibilities, which suited its own temperament and tradition and environment, and be free to exercise it with all its own moralities, even though the whole world were exercising other modes of life with other moralities. Mankind seems so far to have learnt nothing from the example offered by America. There never was, there never will be, another so vast and magnificent opportunity for filling a continent with half a hundred variegated and wonderful States, each totally and yet harmoniously different from the others, as North America presented a century or two ago. If God himself had planned it, the opportunity could not have been grander. The best and most varied environments were present, with the best and most varied migrants from old Europe offering themselves, with the finest seeds for great social ideals, with new fantastic communities already germinally sprinkled over the rich and promising soil, some of them, however

swiftly suppressed, always to remain memorable in the world's history. But then a strange fate befell. Men and states became alike possessed by a fierce eruption of the Herd Instinct. They were both standardised, and woe to the individuals or the communities which went beyond the measure of that standard rule, for the same customs and laws and ideals that ruled in one State ruled in all States. They all ran down the same steep place and were all lost in the same sea of uniformity, for Judge Lynch saw to it that the spirits of any rebels, if not their bodies, were duly destroyed.

They speculate that some day our solar system may perish in a sudden conflagration or collision, or else slowly freeze. But surely, long before that final catastrophe, Man will have disappeared, dead of boredom at his own monotony.

March 17. — I have been exercised for I do not know how many years by the problem of the origin of new forms of æsthetic sensibility: the problem, that is to say, why new forms of æsthetic sensibility are ever arising and old forms ever disappearing, alike in the individual and in the crowd, which sometimes, though not always, is able to discern what in the first place one or two individuals only had discovered. It is a problem that must really go back at least as far

as Palæolithic Man, for even if we believe that the motives of the men of that age in art were primarily of a magical nature, still they expressed themselves in changing forms which were calculated to appeal to what even the man of modern culture recognises as a delicate æsthetic sense.

We have to grant an initial general æsthetic sensibility. There seems no difficulty in that. And if that is granted, we must accept the possibility of changes or variations. An excessive reaction to one kind of stimulus produces fatigue, and so another kind of reaction is a grateful physiological relief. It is a familiar phenomenon how we turn from the æsthetic fashions — and æsthetic must here include religious — prevailing in our youth to new fashions; and our children, weary of our "new" fashions, find a delicious novelty in the old fashions we had rejected. We see how attractive many of those Victorian things we were born amid, and loathed, have become to a new generation. But that is only a general verity, and it is the special manifestations of it that intrigue my curiosity.

We have to define at the outset when a mere general appreciation and enjoyment becomes a genuine æsthetic sensitiveness to a particular art manifestation, and that distinction itself can only be made as a kind of intuition; there is no precise

standard of measurement to apply. The vogue of Dumas and Dickens and Dostoevski has nothing to do with æsthetic sensitivity — though all these writers may make that appeal to a few — but merely to an indiscriminating excited interest. It seems to me doubtful whether Shakespeare ever found any person during his lifetime possessed of the æsthetic sensibility to enjoy him (I doubt it even as regards so sound a critic as Ben Jonson, though he may have come nearest), or even for more than a century after his death; it appeared with the Romantic Movement, and perhaps Goethe was its pioneer. Ben Jonson, and to some extent Chapman, appealed much more to the æsthetic sensibility of Elizabethan and Jacobean days, and it was around them that the æsthetically sensitive young men of that age gathered. That is not, indeed, surprising; if we had not known it we might have guessed it. If we examine the actual tone of feeling in that age, the quality of nervous sensibility, it becomes clear that Shakespeare on the higher plane, and Ford on a lower — even though their contemporaries might find much in them to enjoy — could not possibly be appreciated in that intimate degree that became easy for the men of a later age.

Even when we may reasonably assume that poets encountered a genuine æsthetic apprecia-

tion, the disappearance and reëmergence of that sensibility often seems mysterious. The poets of the later seventeenth century, the so-called "metaphysical school," were so numerous, they must surely have been sensitively felt in their intimate quality by those around them, and we know the immense influence of Cowley, who was indeed too wide in his appeal to be confined within the bonds of a "metaphysical" school. But when the seventeenth century was over they rapidly became unintelligible and worse, mere butts for scoffing and ridicule. It is only within the last twenty or thirty years that, first, Donne, the earliest of them, and then the rest, have been discovered to vibrate to the rhythm of our modern temperaments. But why?

It is in the individual's tastes, however, that the problem of æsthetic sensibility is most clearly presented. Then we can largely eliminate the mob-suggestion, the influence of fashion or authority, and are brought up against the central fact. It is a kind of "conversion," as would be said in the special case of religious sensibility, a sudden revolution by which something that was foreign suddenly becomes as it were native, something that was ugly becomes beautiful. That is an experience that perhaps happens to us — as again with religion — most definitely in youth.

I remember that the writing of Whitman seemed barbaric and ridiculous to me until one day, suddenly, I saw it afresh, much as I have continued to see it ever since. Similar experiences occur to others. So fine and sensitive an artist as René Boylesve has lately confessed that when he first turned his attention to Proust's writing he found it unreadable, though now it delights him.

But it is in painting that æsthetic sensibility seems to me most easy to examine because most clearly marked. Shakespeare was always played and read, so that it remains possible for the shallow observer to suppose that the same æsthetic sensibility prevailed throughout. No such claim could be made for Velasquez. His royal master Philip IV may possibly have understood him, since Kings are well placed for æsthetic appreciation, and his contemporary Giordano, if he really painted that wonderful *pastiche* in the London National Gallery long attributed to Velasquez himself, may have understood, but for the most part one seeks in vain, except perhaps among one or two English amateurs, for any sign of genuine sensibility to the peculiar qualities of that artist, until the nineteenth century when Manet and Whistler showed in their work the sincerity of their sensibility to Velasquez. We cannot understand this better than by turning to Reynolds'

Discourses, for here, even in the admiration which that highly intelligent and receptive English master felt for the Portrait of Pope Innocent we cannot help discerning that he was really blind to the qualities in Velasquez that thrill us; to Reynolds, it would seem, the Innocent portrait is a fine example of the kind of thing Titian had done. Vermeer of Delft, who is a sort of Dutch Velasquez, has taken as long to affect æsthetic sensibility; to-day every picture of his seems exquisitely beautiful even to people who know nothing of painting; yet till a few years ago his name was scarcely mentioned. It is even the same with the Italian masters who of all are the most popular. No painter, for instance, seems more obviously attractive than Botticelli, and yet before the days of Ruskin he was merely one in an indistinguishable and little-noted crowd. So also with Carpaccio.

It sometimes seems that there are fashions which some popular expert foists on the public. But that is an inadequate explanation. Any such influence would swiftly glide off the public's slippery back. The man who proclaims the new admiration is merely a more eloquent and daring exponent of what all are already vaguely beginning to feel.

I realise this in my own experience. I re-

member how, years ago, I was fascinated by Vermeer's "Head of a Young Girl" at the Hague, long before it was described by an enthusiast as "the most beautiful thing in Holland," and when, I believe, it had only recently been acquired and Vermeer was as little known to me as to most of the rest of the world. And I have long admired Caravaggio in silence — ever since more than a quarter of a century ago I saw the "Lute Player" at the Liechtenstein Gallery in Vienna and felt that here was the creator of seventeenth-century art and so of our later art — and now I find that this long neglected master is at length becoming appreciated. One could easily go on pointing out the continual emergence at some moment of a new widespread general sensibility to some neglected phase of art.

I see afresh, indeed, that this intuitive revelation to æsthetic sensibility of a painter's special view of the world is really of the nature of religious conversion. It is as explicable as that, no doubt, but no more explicable. And the more clearly one realises that fact the more clearly one understands the solid reality of mysticism as at once the essence of religion and the supreme manifestation of æsthetic sensibility. If we could use that once ridiculed term "æsthete" seriously, one might say that the Mystic is the æsthete of the Universe.

April 29. — I remember how — nearly fifty years ago now — a friend in Australia who had formerly been a New South Wales Government official, told me he had once come officially in contact with Anthony Trollope, and how surprised he had been to note, though he was himself a man of singularly mild disposition, the extreme nervousness and timidity of the famous novelist.

Trollope wrote an *Autobiography*. I have never more than glanced at it but a distinguished literary critic has just read it in a new reprint and he published his impressions of it in yesterday's *Nation*. For our critic, Trollope seems in his *Autobiography* the stolid incarnation of energy and audacity. The critic even refuses to believe Trollope's own statement that he was tormented in boyhood by his companions; "if anyone tormented him Trollope would have knocked him out," the critic imagines; "he was a force of Nature. . . . There was about him, almost physically, an animal odour of masculinity."

Trollope was an artist, as much so in imaging himself as his other creations, and I am amused to see how he has evidently been able to deceive even the elect. For I cannot doubt that so good a critic has correctly, however ingenuously, perceived at least the surface values of Trollope's

Autobiography, although one would have supposed that to an acute critic the kind of man whom he supposes Trollope to have been is not the kind of man who devotes his life to fine literary creation. At all events the great literary artists I have come across were not like that, and if we go back to the ages commonly regarded as more robust I should be surprised to learn on unimpeachable authority that Chaucer and Spenser and Shakespeare bore about them a peculiarly animal odour of masculinity.

We may hear rather too much of psychoanalysis nowadays. But evidently there is some advantage for a literary critic in possessing a tincture of that discipline. When Alfred Adler formulated his doctrine of the "masculine protest" — the tendency of sensitive and feminine and maybe defective souls to imagine themselves other than they are, and sometimes even to approximate themselves to what they imagine — he was throwing an illuminative ray of light over the artist, at all events those artists who have been more concerned with the arts of fiction than of science. Whenever we seem to come in contact with an artist who is excessively stolid and aggressively masculine we may profitably think of Trollope.

May 12. — Sometimes I have wondered why it is that Man, and most of all comparatively civilised Man, has taken such joy in torturing himself and his fellows, why it is that he is ever setting up Inquisitions to inflict misery on others and in the intervals vigorously applying the discipline to his own back. It has sometimes seemed to me unnatural, a kind of pathological sadism and masochism.

Yesterday, while I watched with delight Major Dugmore's kinema records of his expedition to East Africa, to record the life of wild animals under conditions from which so-called "sport" was eliminated, and thus wild animals be studied so far as possible under completely natural conditions, in their family life and ordinary occupations, the explanation began to dawn on me. All animals, it became clear, even under the most favourable natural conditions, even in the apparent absence of the supreme enemy Man, are leading a life of unceasing physical irritation and perpetual mental anxiety. Apart from the difficulties of obtaining food and water, and the need for constant guardianship of the young, there must be endless watchfulness against living enemies large and small, beasts of prey, and, scarcely less important, parasites. Ears, noses, tails must be for ever alert, always in vibratory movement, movement in some animals of an al-

most incredible swiftness. One notes on the film how often these animals are turning round in this everlasting *qui vive* even though there may not be the faintest sign of danger. The giraffes will stand in hesitation for an hour before actually coming down to the pool to drink, all the more, of course, if they can have the slightest suspicion of the concealed presence of any animal of that deadliest and cowardliest species which invented the rifle, even when he is armed with nothing more dangerous than a camera. The doves only dare to drink one swift sip, knowing that the turtles beneath the surface of the water are ready to dart out their heads and seize them. Even the huge elephants have cautiously learnt to move through the forests so silently that a herd of them may be inaudible at a few yards' distance. Among the apes, so defenceless and such excellent eating, this nervousness is legitimately carried to the extreme. It is indeed only because they learned to climb trees that they escaped extermination and were enabled to bestow to earth the dubious gift of Man.

Man by his infinite cleverness has held in check the dangers that threatened him from other animals, large and small. He has devised artificial weapons, he has made clothes, he has built walled cities, he has enlisted the police, he

has discovered the use of standing armies and insecticide powders. He is still hopefully seeking for vaccines.

Yet the more successful these measures become the more he grows conscious of an unsatisfied want. For he still inherits the ancient impulse of anxiety and apprehension. It becomes a neurosis when it remains ungratified. So that when other animals cease to torture him he must torture himself. Having destroyed the wolf Man must become a wolf unto himself: *Homo homini lupus.* Man was born for fear and when he has destroyed the natural causes of fear it is inevitable that he should replace them by substitutes. Otherwise his natural aptitudes would fail of gratification. He must needs torture himself, when other things cease to torture him, because torture is part of Nature.

When the world first strikes upon our ignorant youthful vision it seems full of things that we call "unnatural." All our lives long we are slowly gaining a deeper insight into what is evidently the far from obvious truth that Nature is always natural.

June 3. It is sometimes rather trying to have to live in a world where the essential things are hidden from sight by people who either fail to see

them or take pains to ignore them or else openly profess that they are not there.

That is the feeling that underlies all my hostility and resentment at biography, as biography is commonly perpetrated, in spite of the fact that biography is precisely the form of literature which I am most ready to find of fascinating interest and of profound instruction. But paint them as they are, paint them as they are! I do not want a picture of clothes, that are not even them at all.

No doubt it is the altogether irrelevant moral prejudice that comes in to spoil all here. The biographer foolishly imagines he is a moralist, and so he puts in all the conventionally moral high lights and leaves out all that he supposes to be the immoral black shadows, and the picture is nonsensical and even non-existent. For every human creature so living that men have been affected by its life, and directed their eyes to its radiance even after death, was all of a piece and cannot thus be disintegrated without being destroyed.

I am thinking, though not alone, of the reviews I have just come across of the lately published Letters of a man I slightly knew. The reviewers discuss the question of whether he posed and attitudinised or whether he represented a

spiritual enlightenment and a religious conversion. But the central fact which he had experienced — what he himself called "the very essence of the best things I've seen in my life" — the essence as it appeared from the standpoint of God, however little sympathy it might evoke from the ordinary spectator, that they are unable to see or blankly ignore.

June 26. — I went up to London from the sea yesterday — flinging away recklessly one of the few hardly won days of warm sunshine this month has offered — to see the Phœnix's performance of Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*. The sacrifice, after all, was worth while. The Phœnix has done nothing better, not only in the acting but in all the accessories, not least the music. It all comes out as a finely harmonised unity.

It was well worth doing. So many years have passed since I was concerned with its text that *The Faithful Shepherdess* only lingered in memory as a vaguely pleasant thing written in free delicious verse that was beautifully adequate without being of supreme order. Now for the first time I clearly realise what the Arcadian pastoral, of which this is so admirable a type, represents in the history of the human spirit.

That the pastoral is the manifestation of an

artificial mood of unreal playfulness in life seems usually to have been taken for granted. And it was so. But so to regard it, and to leave the matter there, is to overlook the motive source of its inspiration and the cause of its power. How it arose, the really essential question, is left unanswered.

When we consider that question, we see that, however artificially unreal the pastoral — poem, novel, or play — may seem to us, it arose primarily as a reaction against an artificially unreal and dissolving culture. The pastoral never originated in an integral, simple, vigorous, straightforward stage of culture, still within actual sight of any true pastoral life. The Greeks of the age of Pericles had no use for *Daphnis and Chloe* and even *The Faithful Shepherdess* came a little before its due time in England, a little too near the robust classic period of Elizabeth, and so was not well received when first put on the stage. The pastoral belongs not to an age of strong faith and rugged action but rather to an age when faith has become uncertain and action hesitant or tortuous, an age when criticism comes to be applied to what seems a dissolute time, a time of vice and hypocrisy, a time which has lost its old ideals. The attitude of Ben Jonson towards his own age is herein significant, and it is illustrated even in

his laudatory verses about this very pastoral of Fletcher's, a poem "murdered," he says, by a generation unworthy of it, though it may not have been altogether the corruption of the age but in part the lingering "old-fashioned simplicity" of it which rendered Fletcher's audience obtuse to the significance of *The Faithful Shepherdess.*

So it is that the pastoral arises not as an unreal artificiality but as a protest against an age of what seems unreal artificiality, put into the only form which is possible to poetic minds who feel what seems to their sensitive tempers the defects of their own age.

Fletcher, following the Italians who had earlier realised the same thing in their own more advanced culture, understood, or else instinctively felt, that the time had come in the course of the Renaissance mood, then even in England approaching its end, to find enchanting by contrast with his own age the picture of the old strong simple Pagan age, such as tradition represented it, yet touched with a tincture of what was sweetest and purest in the Christian world. He sought to present therein the implicit and indirect criticism of an age such as he felt his own was becoming, with its confusions and its vices and its perversities and its slaughter and its deceit.

Such a form of art — a pastoral tragi-comedy Fletcher called it — has its superficial aspect of artificial unreality, but beneath that is the life-blood of a genuine impulse of art, exactly adapted — as such a spirit as Fletcher's so sensitively human and so finely cultured could not fail to make it — to the situation of the immediately post-Elizabethan age of the early seventeenth century.

For the general public, at all events that of the theatre, it appeared a little prematurely because they were not themselves yet clear where they stood. It was not till half a century later that the age, having become more conscious of its own state, was enabled to enjoy *The Faithful Shepherdess*, and Pepys notes that it is "much thronged after and often shown."

To-day, after centuries of neglect, by those few people privileged to be present it is again approved, and is perhaps the most genuinely and enthusiastically applauded of the Phœnix's excellent revivals of old plays. Our age has an analogy to that of the Restoration. We, too, have lately emerged from a long period of war and we experience the same reactions as the Restoration period experienced. We can enter sympathetically into the things they enjoyed because, even under an antique garment, they

answer to our own needs. Our youthful fire-eaters of the Great War are beginning to feel a little disillusioned. Their patriotic thirst for blood has cooled; I do not hear them talk, as I heard a young officer in 1914, of cutting up their enemies "like pork." They begin to understand that murder is an activity in which it is desirable to exercise a certain moderation; they are visited by a suspicion that in seeking to destroy a youthful nation potent for the civilisation of the future they have perhaps earned a name quite other than that of "heroes." They begin to be ready for such criticism as Fletcher sprinkled over his age when he playfully presented a magical world in which one may be brutally murdered twice before beginning to lead a happy life. There is still hope for the world!

July 30. — It is the fashion among some of the younger writers of France to show contempt for Flaubert — "faire pipi sur Flaubert" as it has been expressed over there — and even estimable critics, indecorous as it may seem, are occasionally found indulging this youthful impulse. The practice has indeed spread to England and I seem to remember anonymous writers in this attitude through columns of literary reviews in which they finally dismissed Flaubert as a small

inferior writer. One need not be disturbed. There yet remain some in every age who are not carried away by such streams of contempt, and I note that so excellent a critic as Thibaudet in his book on Flaubert is content to remark briefly that the discredit into which Flaubert has fallen is mainly "a temporary accident," and that he who so disdained the public may well remain content when the crowd disdains him and continue, like the Juggler of Our Lady, to worship the God within him after his own manner.

For my own part I also am well content. I recognize and I altogether sympathise with the present tendency to regard the opposite methods of Stendhal as an ideal of literature, for my attachment to Stendhal dates from early youth. And since Flaubert himself was completely unable to appreciate Stendhal it is meet that he himself should encounter the same reprobation. Yet there remains no author whom I turn to more often than Flaubert or with a greater reverence. In my private gallery his portrait stands only below Goethe's. I have been reading his *Correspondance* — to say nothing of the other books which I have known more or less since I was seventeen — for the past ten years and with a joy that never fails. But I am not anxious that he should be regarded as the head of a school

which has no existence, or receive the dubiously precious salutations of the crowd. The critic who undertakes to head off the general herd from this direction may claim my gratitude, though he may not win my esteem.

August 23. — It all seems like a dream, this visit to the Midi, to a region I have always avoided before but desired to see something of at last, from the swift flight in the air to Paris — so tame after that of two years ago! — to the return journey in the night Rapide from Nice, with windows closed through the sombre glow of flaming forest trees in the Esterel, at the end of this southern dream of ever cloudless skies and unbroken heat: Tamaris, Antibes with Juan les Pins, Cagnes, lying in the sea or sun-bathing on the shore, with La Douce by my side, a miracle of radiant energy under the sun of her ancestral land, at times threatening to become almost as fierce as it, while I have never been so lazy in my life before, and even now with the shadow of that delightful languor over me, even with this "invasion of Polar air" over England which the Meteorological Bureau reports as though it were a novelty, I find no inclination to write down our adventures or to tell of the delightful friends we sought out at Seyne-sur-Mer and the atmo-

sphere of the *Arabian Nights* that surrounded their villa. It all seems like a dream, even to the bugs that the horrified La Douce found in her bed at the luxurious Grand Hotel.

Now, a few days after my return — looking through accumulated piles of letters — I come on a press-cutting, sent by some unknown American friend, who, I am sure, had no thought of awaking me from my dream, entitled "Unscientific and Filthy," and narrating the prosecution — though it was not clear how the matter ended — of a man somewhere in Canada for selling certain books in which I feel a very personal interest, as being of a most horrible character, an opinion with which the seller himself agreed, while the magistrate was duly solemn.

At first I felt amusement touched with annoyance. It seemed as though I had been taken back into an antediluvian world I thought had fortunately vanished, or that some one had prised up a moss-grey stone and unexpectedly revealed the loathsome and bewildered maggots running about beneath. But I quickly accepted the situation with unsmiling serenity.

It has seemed to me, and especially of recent years, that people are apt to accept one's new vision of the world too easily, to accept indeed without really accepting, not grasping clearly

what it is that they accept. One is thus seemingly joined by people who continue calmly to follow the same old course, however sympathetic they seem to become toward one's work, passing from violent repulsion to complacent agreement and yet not changing one jot. When I encounter this attitude, I feel that I have not made sufficiently clear what it is that I stand for; I feel that I want to warn the public off the dangerous ground they are treading. These people have so often no right to agree with me. They have not gone through the long and painful noviciate which would alone create a new heart within them. They ought to remain at their old stage of violent repulsion. So that when I hear what Canadian police inspectors think about my books I am reassured. There are still people engaged in maintaining an element which is essential to the complete harmony of my little universe.

THE END

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